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THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH
AS A
SOCIALIZING AGENCY

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

If one allows his imagination to drift back into the last century and attempts to visualize the place the Church held in the lives of rural people, he cannot but be impressed by the place it occupied and the great influence it exerted.

In those days the minister was looked to for all kinds of help and advice, and naturally so, for he was quite often the best educated man in the community. It was the travelling pastor who brought not only spiritual help, but news of the outside world also, to those lonely isolated souls who braved the dangers and hardships of the American frontier. Again, it was usually the Church which took up the cause of righteousness in a community and at the periodically occurring camp meetings scores were turned from a life of un-Godliness to one of a very definite consciousness of God's forgiveness and fellowship.

When we contrast this picture with what we see to-day we cannot but be impressed and disturbed. It is very evident that in many cases the Church has lost its influence upon rural life. It is imperative, therefore, if our country civilization is to be salvaged and enriched, that the Church take upon itself the task of ministering to the social, and even the economic life, of the

community, as well as to its spiritual life. To do this she must build herself into a central place with a community centered, rather than a church or denomination centered program.

It is not enough that the Church be a "one day a week" institution, carrying on a Sunday School and Church service only. Our present day conception of religion as daily living has so shot through all our activity that the Church must be prepared with a program and message to meet all the demands that will inevitably arise. No longer is it sufficient guaranty of a man's religion to say that he is one of the pillars of the church. The great question is, "how does he live?" "Does he drive a sharp bargain?" "Is he more concerned over his bank account than the welfare of the underprivileged or the man whose mortgage he holds?" These and many other questions are the tests of the modern man's Christianity. To inspire and create the kind of life which shall measure up to the standards is the task of the Church, and to do this she must provide a broader and more vital program.

The Church can no longer be satisfied with only the spiritual welfare of the community. She must concern herself with the facilities of the social and recreational life and the environment in which they are carried on. There must be a wider community service, an interest in the economic life and a willingness to help in the solution of economic problems. All this must be done, not with the view of self-glorification or for the promotion of a denominational program, but because the Church sees that if men are

to be helped to live abundantly she must be vitally and helpfully interested in every phase of community life. It is this kind of program that we will endeavor to set forth in this thesis.

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

I.

THE CHURCH ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

It took courage and fortitude to face the dangers and hardships of the American Frontier. Those early settlers who ever pressed Westward under the pressure of advancing civilization earned for themselves a glory that shall never fade for they wrested from the grip of primitive forces the factor out of which our American civilization has sprung.

As the Pioneer led his family Westward he faced many opposing forces. Every foot of land he secured first had to be won from its original owners, the Indians. Often the Indians were hostile and many an inherited homestead of to-day was paid for in blood in Pioneer days. Added to the element of danger from Indians was the stubborn fight with the primitive soil. Often before it produced it had to be cleared of its forests, underbrush and grass. Against these the Pioneer had to struggle alone, with his axe, hoe and crude plow. Although his personal safety and welfare might be secured the early settler had to protect his livestock from the attacks of the panther, wildcat wolf and other wild beasts of the primitive world in which he lived. Out of his isolation and suspicion of adventurers as criminals the Pioneer developed a trait that has endured until the present - that of selfishness. It is this trait that has

held back progress in many cases. We cannot wholly condemn such an attitude because it has caused the farmer to build solidly. However, in the by and large, we are probably justified in saying that it has harmed the farmer more than can be repaid by the good it has done. We shall meet this problem agin in our discussion.

As the Frontier spread farther from the centers of religious influence the need of a Frontier Church was seen the Pioneer family carried its Bible and meager supply of books having spiritual content, but the many hardships and discouragements called for the comfort and inspiration of the minister and organized Church. With this in mind the Congregational Home Missionary Society appealed for help on the grounds that the Church was needed as a community institution and that the Gospel was needed to win men and women to a new life in God.

Out of these conditions arose the mission of the Pioneer Church. It encouraged Bible reading and proclaimed the Gospel by interpreting it in terms of personal salvation. This view of salvation fitted in with the individualistic attitude of the times and exerted a mighty influence on those lonely people. However we may criticise the Church for its early methods, they were the best for the times. The Church on the Frontier was a great force in saving rural society from vice and the sordid worship of material things.

It might be said that the Church is suffering from this

method of former days. In answer we say that if the Church had not taken the path it did, it is more than likely that there would be no Church in the rural community to-day. Furthermore individual churches are often ready to adopt a progressive program of federation, cooperation and the like, but the outside pressure of denominational boards keeps competition alive.

The Pioneer preachers were men of leadership. They won their way by sheer force of character. They believed in their calling and their country, and their earnestness compelled belief in their gospel. Those early preachers were intense patriots and they encouraged loyalty to the Union. No doubt they played no small part in aiding in its preservation.

The Church of that period supplied a place of meeting on a democratic basis of social equality, and the Pioneer preachers were socializing agencies for social, political and intellectual solidarity. These men travelled and knew what was going on. They were sources of information on subjects of political, sociological, economic, scientific and educational value.

When the Church had been established on the Frontier the thoughts of the settlers turned to the Indians and they began to feel a concern for their spiritual welfare. Also they thought it only just that the Indians be Christianized, for un-Christian Indians might attack them. The desire to Christianize and civilize the Indians is the reason for the elaborate social and indus-

trial programs of some of the early missionaries to the Indians.

Thus the first carriers of Christianity beyond the colonial borders were missionaries to the Indians. Schools were founded to educate them in Christian principles and as tradesmen. It was a difficult task and the Indians responded slowly, if at all. This caused a loss of interest at the home sources and resulted in a reduction of contributions to the work. Another cause for the loss of interest was the diminishing contact with the Indians as the colonial frontier pushed them farther away. Later the new frontier re-established the contacts and there was a period of increasing interest but later came the decline.¹

As greater numbers of Pioneers came Westward the tendency was to shift support from the Indian work to religious work among the Pioneers who were cut off from Christian bodies. People began to realize that a great power was rising in the West and that they needed the Church, if the ideals and values of Christianity were to be preserved. The greater freedom of the Frontier, the breaking down of old restraints and the building of new customs and ideas made Christian influences imperative. The influx of European immigrants seemed to be the evolving of a new race which needed Christianity to help this new race by giving it the knowledge and spirit of the Christian Gospel. Thus American Christianity became a missionary work to all mankind, as represented

¹ Mode: The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity. p.22-26.

by the immigrants. In reality this was a preparation for the larger task which was later to fall on the shoulders of the American Church.

The acquisition of Upper California brought America face to face with the Orient and then came the call to take Christianity to them. About this time England was colonizing in the Orient also and the two nations undertook to Christianize that part of the world. Later came the reverses to the British imperialistic policy in the Crimean War. This shifted the responsibility to America and it was soon seen that she must carry the greater share of the work. Thus we can see how American Christianity spread from one which was primarily interested in ministering to its own people to one which looked out on wider horizons of world service. Upon the West depends the success of much of the work.

Because the colonists were isolated from England by three thousand miles of water and were constantly spreading out on an ever widening frontier, it was inevitable that an American type of Christianity and civilization should arise. We might even say that American civilization has been mainly a civilization of the frontier. Frontier contact has been more than incidental, for out of the Frontier has our national expansion been carved. It is the one unifying factor of our national development. The earliest colonists, in spite of the ocean trip, thought of themselves as on the Frontier of the Motherland, and were not slow to move inland. It was due to this factor that the Americanization of Christianity

and civilization in America took place.

The Frontier has kept American society in constant movement and has built a character in harmony with it. These were those who constantly felt the pressure of new settlers coming into the new territory and to escape this pressure and find new adventures and land they kept moving on. To-day we find traces of that same restlessness in the young men and women who are dis-satisfied with conditions and are doing all they can to change them or go to where they can be satisfied. While the typical American of to-day is the embodiment of the attitude produced by the Frontier, it is not an intellegent organized system of education. It is simply the influence of the Frontier which unconsciously produced the America of to-day.

The religious life was not apart from this constant movement. It was carried with the pioneers when they pushed onward, and was confronted by the needs of the Frontier civilization.

"The Church had to provide, first of all, the children with a means of grace, and later to see to it that a rapidly rising civilization of the West was to be equipped with a Christian institution and nurtured in Christian ideals. A vast organization had to be built to arouse and utilize the spiritual responsibilities; methods had to change; sectarian sensitiveness had to give way to interdenominational comity and cooperation. All this was a part of the gigantic enterprise to which American Christianity set its hand when it undertook to Christianize the Frontier."¹

The spirit of the Frontier imprinted itself on the

¹. Mode: The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity. p.13.

Christianity imported from the East and it took on the Frontier characteristics. American Christianity is different to-day than it was in the days of the first colonies. There is a freedom, joyousness, and outlook that was not present in those early colonies. The change came during the Pioneer period and gives a distinctive character to American religious life.

At the present time we are hearing much about Church Union. Looking back to the earliest New England Colonies we are impressed by the unity which existed. The Puritans came to America, not to separate from the English Church, but to establish a pure form of that Church. When they arrived there were new conditions to which adjustments had to be made. The "Congregational" form was already in existence in Plymouth and the Puritans, seeking for a form of government more in harmony with the new land and attitude, seriously considered the "Congregational" form. Gradually they adopted it and what would have been two distinct religious bodies became one.

During the years of the following century members of many different denominations came to the new land and being thrown so closely together they began considering their common task. In about 1741 the German and Dutch Reformed Churches and the Presbyterians attempted a plan of union but at a crucial moment the North Holland Synod held back and prevented what would have been an important union.¹

¹

Mode: The Frontier Spirit and American Christianity. p.103-5.

In 1801 occurred a significant action that had all the possibilities of far reaching results. It was the Plan of Union perfected by the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. Its purpose was to promote union and harmony and provided for an exchange of ministers in the churches of each denomination, along with other features of ultimate union. While this plan was finally abandoned, after several years of operation, it is a significant example of the non-denominational impulse of the last century.

When the Western territory was thrown open for settlement people went there for economic gain, not from any religious motive. Consequently people from all denominations found themselves thrown together in one community. When the missionary came he gathered everyone in one place to worship. Such worship could not but produce the realization that denominational differences, that had loomed large in the East, were not of primary importance. The means of evangelizing these Frontier people was the Camp Meeting. This proved to be another force in diffusing Christian fellowship. Denominational and theological differences were not exalted, instead all denominations cooperated in the common cause of evangelizing the Pioneer community.¹

While the people on the Frontier were breaking down sectarian differences by community worship, the people in the East were forming missionary societies, without denominational differences, to carry on the Frontier work. What were known as "Female

¹ Mode: The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity. p.106-8.

Societies", corresponding to the present day Women's Missionary Society, furthered non-denominational work. The American Tract Society was organized to supply good reading material and had no interest in denominational propaganda. The American Bible Society, organized for the dissemination of the Scriptures, by its very nature could not be denominational. This was also true of the American Sunday School Union which had as its purpose the establishing of Sunday Schools without denominational affiliations.¹

Looking at these facts one might ask, "How did the disunion of the present day arise out of this atmosphere of co-operation?" Such a question is justified, for out of those days of non-denominationalism has come an appalling condition of dis-union and denominational rivalry.

We can see the first whisperings of the coming dis-union as early as 1838. In that year the General Synod of the Lutheran Church of the United States issued a call to the other denominations to consider union. The proposed union was to be a simple one; allowing for freedom of doctrinal belief, organization, discipline and worship; yet it was to be a union nevertheless, it was to be a union based upon their common task, a co-operative movement pressing on in the evangelistic mission of the Church. The project failed because of the dispute which arose over slavery, and as time passed and the dispute became more acute the breach was widened beyond any hope of reconciliation.²

¹ Mode: The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity. p.110-113.

² Ibid. p.116-17.

However, slavery and its attendant difficulties, was not the only cause for division. Even more deep seated and far reaching were the theological differences which arose between denominations. It was inevitable that a community listening to one form of theology would be converted to that form of thinking. When several forms of theology began competing in a community conditions were even worse, and as a consequence whole communities were often rent open. The Camp meetings turned aside from their original purpose of evangelization and became centers of theological discussion. One's status as a Christian or non-Christian largely depended upon what theological belief he held.

In many cases the settlement of new territory went on so rapidly that communities became isolated with little news from the outside. This gave ample opportunity for discussion and it was usually of a theological nature. As a result a community would sometimes have several modes of thought within it. The outcome of such differences was a strong sectarian attitude.

The news of this agitation caused every denomination to rush into all available places and plant its own type of organization. The strategic points were at a premium and often several denominations located in one of these, resulting in the bitterest competition and un-Christian rivalry. Out of this abnormal period of competition and expansion arose the condition of overchurched communities. Each church had its peculiar views and struggled to gain the lead in the community. This spirit of

sectarianism went beyond the Church. Often it was the deciding factor in the selection of a school teacher. Under the guise of providing an education many denominational colleges sprang up. However, the real purpose was usually the proselytizing of the young people by denominational propaganda.

Thus we have the situation as it existed at the beginning of the present century and to a large degree as it exists to-day in many sections. Furthermore we are faced with a rural civilization that lacks many of the values which would make it a powerful factor in creating a more significant American civilization. At the center of this rural civilization is the Church, which seems almost helpless to cope with the situation. There are certain significant factors which make up rural life and a knowledge of them will help us explain the conditions as they exist in community and Church. To examine them is our next task.

CHAPTER II

THE CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH

II.

THE CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH

We have no definite way of arbitrarily determining the limits of the community area. Several factors must be considered when discovering the boundaries of the community. We must consider the topography, size of the village population, the predominant crops, size of the farms, kind of roads, proximity to the city, and whether the village is also a county seat. These factors are always present in determining the extent of the community's influence.

Another thing to remember is that the same area is not served by all the agencies of the community. That is, the banks, stores, churches, schools, and so on, all serve a differently bounded area. An examination of Hawthorne's, "The Sociology of Rural Life"¹ will show what is meant.

Within the community we find sections called neighborhoods and the efficient Church must reckon with them in the formation of a program which serves everyone. Several factors enter into the formation of a neighborhood. There are nationality ties, the grouping in one particular area of those of a certain nationality; denominational ties caused by the gathering of church groups in one locality; service ties of the neighborhood stores etc.; and

¹ p.292, 306-7. See also Brunner: American Agricultural Villages, p.73-89.

leadership. If the leadership of a neighborhood moves away that neighborhood often ceases to exist.¹

While rural people often like to say that the structure of their society is similar to that of the city, we must not close our eyes to the fact that there are certain characteristics which are typical of rural society alone. A large population in a small area creates a city, while a small population in a large area creates a rural district. The occupation of farming needs a large area and this reduction in density of population makes for isolation. This isolation gives rise to the desire for more and better social contacts. Racially the country is more homogeneous than the city, especially where European agricultural families have settled in one location. This condition exists markedly in the Middle West where thousands of North European peoples settled in the Pioneer days. Even to-day the racial solidarity has not been affected to any marked degree. In the country singleness of occupation, the simplicity of economic interests and the wider distribution of people brings freedom from the class distinctions of the city.

It is often said that rural people engage in little or no play. To a certain extent this is true but it is often the sweeping conclusion of one who sees only the surface. The fact is that there is no sharp division between certain types of work and play. The work is brought into the conversation at all times and certain

¹ Brunner; American Agricultural Villages. p.64-69.

types of work, while they must be done, are accepted as a break in the routine and are a form of play. However, farm work does force recreation into narrow limits. Vacations and leisure hours are few because of the necessity of being constantly "on the job." Humor is apt to be of a coarse, boisterous type. Love is just as ardent as in the city but is often silent with no great display of emotion. What recreation there is is left to be of a vigorous nature. Baseball, hunting, and fishing are favorites. Lounging, eating and sleeping also have their places. Here, then, is a real challenge to the Church. There is the call to make the few leisure hours count in forming Christian character. By learning to play together young people and children will learn to work together in later years when the call to community service and progress comes.

In the economic life of the country we find certain peculiarities. In the city capital and labor are separate interests while in the country there is a close identity between them. The farmer is both capitalist and laborer. He owns his own property and machinery and does his own work. In the farmer we find combined a great deal of managing ability and a variety of technical skill. Because he is a capitalist he must know how to manage in order to get the greatest return for his money, time and effort. As a laborer he must know how and when to do the great variety of things necessary to carry on a successful farm. In this sense he is a skilled laborer. Industries in the country are few and simple, not at all like the myriad industries of the city which call for

hundreds of men fitted for their job. Rural industries are crop raising, stock raising, dairying, fruit production, etc. As a result of this simplicity of industry the social and economic organizations are simple.

The center of rural life is the home. In the city there are outside influences which tend to decentralize life and destroy the home influence. In the country few such influences exist. Consequently there is a centralizing of life in the home, which must bear the responsibility of supplying satisfactory stimuli. In the country people live under the public eye and there are stronger moral restraints than in the city. There are not many dark corners of vice and children are morally safer than in the city. The operation of the farm is largely a family matter and this bond of co-operative effort strengthens the home.

To one living in the country the cultural advantages of the city look larger than those of the country. The advantages of art, literature, science, professional service, good schools and churches seem to be lacking, and to a certain degree they are. The schools are mainly elementary. A small number of high school graduates are found in certain sections, and a fewer number still of college graduates. We might cite further examples of this condition but the matter of schools will suffice. However, country people are not ignorant. Many cultural advantages are to be had and many homes have them. We find pictures, books, magazines, music, and the like, much of which is the best. In this day of the radio the best musical programs and lectures

may be brought into the home, while the automobile and good roads make it possible to more easily go to centers where the lacking cultural advantages may be had. Many rural people are deep students of public questions, the presence of more time for study and thought often making them better informed than city people. The average intelligence is as high as the average intelligence of the city, especially in the industrial city. There is the need of leadership which shall be able to stimulate the rural mind, creating a desire for these things and offering means of satisfying the desire.

Looking further at this rural civilization we find that there are certain factors which enter into its structure. The very nature of conditions make the psychology of the country people different. Work is largely done alone and this gives opportunity for solitary thought. This tends to make the farmer individualistic in his thinking. He goes at a problem as an individual, not as a member of a group. While this solitude induces independence and self-reliance, it discourages the co-operative spirit, which is so important in the present day. This deficiency can be noted in many spheres - in that of religion, education, recreation, culture, business, etc. When farmers learn to think as a group they will be able to better existing conditions. The farmer is dependent upon the forces of nature for the success of his crops. He feels that everything depends upon them and this breeds a fatalistic attitude which is apt to hinder co-operative

effort. Such an attitude may also profoundly influence his conception of God and His way with men. Her, indeed, is a great place for the Church to fill. Provincialism and a lack of culture aid in making the farmer conservative. Narrowness and resentments may sometimes lead to radicalism. This lack of a social mind in important matters often causes different community organizations and activities to languish. New knowledge will make the farmer more progressive economically, politically, educationally and religiously. It will stab him awake to his needs and force him to discover his real social hunger. When this happens rural people will take steps to satisfy their needs and desires.

The solitude in which the farmer lives and works tends to prohibit meeting with a group for the discussion of co-operative measures and better farming. Most of his gatherings are for worship or recreation and these, in themselves, if there is not thought given socialization by the leaders, contribute little to this desirable attitude. Isolation or lack of acquaintance tends toward hostility and suspicion, while acquaintance and contacts breed friendships and trust. Group isolation develops sectionalism. Such a group tends to become self-centered and suspicious of other groups. If there is the slightest feeling of isolation sectionalism is apt to appear and this is harmful, not only for the group but for the nation. Commerce and frequent contacts with outside groups will break down this attitude. We have often seen examples of sectionalism in relations between country and city.

I feel that contacts between the city and country are most desirable. If we keep the country ignorant of the city by a lack of contacts it will become suspicious of everything urban. Contacts will broaden both groups in their attitude toward each other.

Since the World War the farmer has experienced tremendous difficulties because of economic depression. A study of the problem is quite revealing as to causes. First comes overproduction. Prior to 1914 farmers raised no more than they sold and conditions were stable. With the outbreak of the war the proximity of the United States to the conflict made her the storehouse of Europe. The cry, "Food will win the war," became the slogan of the world and the American farmer responded by using every available foot of land to increase production. With the signing of the Armistice came the plea to continue in order to feed a starving world, and upon the promise of high prices, he responded. But credit was restricted and produce was destroyed by buyers to keep prices up. The farmer had to pay back his borrowed money and, with the deflation in prices, he was faced with ruin. Another cause grew out of this primary cause. Many people, attracted by high prices, but inexperienced, went into farming. Usually they went bankrupt and this led to financial difficulties.

What have been the results of this economic depression? First we find a loss in rural population. People left the country in great numbers for the city in search of better financial conditions. Consequently an aversion to agriculture grew up among

young people until to-day it is hard to get them to remain on the farm. Another result has been a lowered standard of living. In many cases the services of the county agent, the home demonstration agents, county Y.M.C.A. secretaries, teachers of agriculture and county health nurses have been discontinued. All this has led to an impoverishment of country life. A natural outcome, as has been noted, was indebtedness. In 1910 the indebtedness of American farmers was 1.7 billion dollars, in 1920 it had risen to 4.8 billion, and during the depression years (to 1927) it had again doubled. Solutions suggested have been an easier credit and the scaling down of the debt, but the solution is not yet final. Out of all this has arisen a blighting discouragement. The farmer is often unable to see any future hope and sometimes loses his grip. He is reluctant to pick the broken threads and begin over again, feeling it is impossible. The final result is the cleavage between country and city.¹ The farmer feels, and justly so, that the city has blocked every attempt of the country in its struggle for relief. As a result the farmer is none too friendly toward the city. However, the Farm Bill passed last year seems to show a change on the part of the city. This is very likely a result of the Presidential campaign of 1928, which brought the farm problem before the American people as has never been done before. It is to be hoped that the day of co-operation between city and country is near.

¹ For a more detailed account of these results see Brunner: *The Church and the Agricultural Crisis*, pp. 15-19. I have given here only the high points of the discussion.

In the face of all this economic hardship and its results, what has been the attitude of the Church? In most cases the Church has hardly indicated that she knew the problem existed. She has taken a hasty glance over the country, noted that some things were not as they should be, and has said nothing. The result has been a loss of influence among those to whom she sought to minister. What can the Church say and do to help the farmers when they are faced by such a crisis? It seems to me that several answers can be given.

Those dealing in spiritual things must apply the Gospel to the particular situation at hand. In this the individual Church must not be left to fight alone, but must be supported by the strength of the whole denomination and Christian Church. There must be a deepening of morale through a facing of all the facts and the utilization of all resources.

Pastors should know something of the means by which the community can lift itself and throw their whole support in favor of any such effort. It may be through cooperative marketing, buying, a credit union, etc. The pastor will not have to do all the work or supply the genius of administration. In fact, for the average pastor it would be a mistake to attempt it. However, he should know what is needed and exert his influence and leadership in the most helpful way.

Local churches and national church leaders must construct a financial program with some consideration of the general economic

situation. Benevolences have increased one third but the needs of mission boards have increased also. Quotas have been based upon urban prosperity and have worked hardship upon the country churches in the midst of the economic disorder. As a result of such false rating, deficits have arisen in country churches, often causing extreme discouragement. Denominational boards will have to take this into consideration if the country church is to remain financially sound.

The Church through such educational institutions as the State Agricultural College, the Farm Bureau, etc., and research groups, should study the situation. The questions arising are: What is a fair return for a crop? What does equality of opportunity for the country child mean? Has a farmers' cooperative a right to be treated differently before the law than any other corporation? What is a Christian program for a country community? These questions must be considered and answered in order to get anywhere at all.

As one travels about the country to-day he is impressed by the number of closed and struggling churches of the open country. If he asks why he is told that the leaders go to the stronger church in the village, leaving the open country church to shift for itself. The leadership goes to the village or town church because it has a better preacher, there is a better building, and the service of worship is enriched by superior music.

This situation grew out of the rise of the village. The

early country churches formed a circuit and this was satisfactory for their needs. As the village grew the work of the Church demanded a full time pastor, usually one who was better trained and who could do better work by concentrating in one place. This attracted the leadership and left the country churches to themselves without leadership and often without a pastor. As a result, today many open country churches are left with fewer funds; poorly paid, and consequently poorly trained, leadership; and low attendances. The whole effect has been one of deterioration.

This would not be so tragic if the village and town churches did something to compensate for it, but their attitude has been one of neglect in many cases. Village members and leaders seldom visit country people on the business of the Church. If the country people wish to come to the village, well and good, but little effort is made to serve those who do not come. No effort is made by the village Church to systematically evangelize these people. The 1927 survey of the "Institute of Social and Religious Research"¹ shows 31.6% of the village church members living outside the corporation boundaries. Yet the Church does not meet the majority of country residents, who really support the village by their trade. A suggested solution for reaching these people on the fringes will be given later in the discussion of the Larger Parish Plan.

We now turn to examine the place of the Church in the community. Is the Church the universally dominant institution, is the

¹ Brunner: American Agricultural Villages p. 180-181.

voice of the Church heard above all others, does she lead in all progressive community programs? More often none of these things can be said to be true of the Church. She has lost ground and lost her grip upon the community.

One of the factors contributing to the condition is that of poorly trained leaders. Many rural ministers are young men just out of seminary and serving an apprenticeship, waiting for a city pastorate. Such a minister cannot be heartily in sympathy with the hopes of rural people, neither can he understand their problems. Few of the theological seminaries train men specifically for the rural field. Because of low salaries men of less academic training are found in the rural pastorate. Many are trained in denominational colleges which often do not offer the courses in sociology, psychology, economics, and agriculture, so necessary for the rural minister. Thus lack of specific or general training is often present in men in the rural field.

Another factor is the absence of an adequate program. The emphasis is upon preaching and not all churches can afford to have that every Sunday. Another part of the program is that of evangelistic services. These are expected and every year new converts are made, but very often there is no further result and the Church ceases to function except for such occasions. Over-emphasis on preaching is the cause of this type of revival. As a consequence, there are practically no week day activities. Quite often there is no recreation, social, educational, civic, men's and women's clubs, young people's

societies and clubs and similar programs. As a result the life of some communities is woefully poor.

Even though an adequate program might be desired and planned, in a good many cases it could not be carried out because of a lack of proper equipment. Newer programs require equipment that churches of twenty-five and even fifteen years ago did not provide. The large majority of buildings are equipped for preaching only. Thus no efficient Sunday School can be conducted because of a lack of rooms. Neither can any social or recreational programs be carried on. Some churches are in a state of poor repair, the heating is poor and there is little attractiveness which will inspire worship.

It cannot be denied that the rural church is poorly supported financially. This factor prevents any program that might be constructive. However, this condition is not due to complete indifference. Surveys¹ show that the farmer is willing to support an efficient church program. A shortage of finances is often an indication of an inadequate program. The rural minister is usually poorly paid for the same reason. As we have seen, he is not always the best representative of trained leadership. His work is sometimes divided between as high as seven churches, consequently he cannot render the service possible if he had only one field to serve. This dissipation of effort causes people to feel free to be less concerned over the amount he receives because they know they are not getting all his services.

¹ Taylor, C. C.: Rural Sociology. p. 230

We noted in Chapter I how, as the country, became settled, several churches would be organized within a given community. As this went on villages became over churchd and each had to compete in order to maintain itself. This condition is rife even today. As the number of churches increased the contributions increased, but not in proportion, i.e. the average individual contributions decreased, as did the budgets for the individual churches. This means that in an over churchd town there is insufficient money to support the work and Home Mission aid is necessary. The study of the Institute of Social and Religious Research, 14% of the country churches studied each received an average of \$350.00 in aid and in some cases this was given merely to perpetuate the competition. In very few cases was such aid available to underchurchd areas.¹ The same survey reveals that in the villages there is one church to every 237 persons, while in the open country there is one church to every 440 persons. The average number of churches to a village is 5.6.² These figures come from the study of one hundred and forty communities. The best trained men are placed in the most competitive fields, but records show that trained men in non-competitive situations produce better results than in competitive fields. In the latter, they are forced to use their energies in order to hold their own or gain a possible margin of advantage. Relieved of competition, their energy can be devoted to building and administering a constructive Christian community program. Overchurching prevents cooperation in any community project and produces harmful spiritual

¹Brunner: American Agricultural Villages. p. 179

²Brunner: American Agricultural Villages. p. 174-178.

results. Suspicion and jealousy lest some group should gain the credit for an enterprise completely enervate the community and prevent any progress. What should be regarded as a common Christian enterprise fails because it is more important that denominational supremacy mean more than the cause of the Kingdom of God, and that the vanity of a particular group be placed above the presence of the true Spirit of God.

We might say that the final reason why the Church has lost its grip upon the community is because of the unprogressive nature of the theology preached. The Church has preached that the acceptance of a certain credal statement is necessary to be called a Christian. It has maintained that the saved state consists wholly in the belief in a certain set of doctrines, which more often than not, have little or no relation to life itself. The Church has clung to the old ideas of salvation for the hereafter; while the new is to save them for something here as well, in the belief that a man is prepared for the future by his life here. The new emphasis has been upon life. The farmer is interested in life here and now, he longs for someone to understand and sympathize with him in his problems. The message which touches the vital things of his life has the note of reality to which he will turn again and again and make a part of his faith. The Church which will come to him with a program which encourages better methods of farming and marketing, a more wholesome program of recreation and social life, challenging him to rear a family of children who unconsciously give thanks to the Father for

all they have, and enriches the spiritual life as well, will find that the farmer will gladly cooperate in any way he can. Of course, it is understood that the primary effort of the Church is to relate men to God. To state the work of the Church in such a sociological light does not mean that she is to forget her primary task and lose herself in a purely social program. It means that this is one of the means she will take to make men more conscious of the Father who takes an interest in the minutae of daily life.

Perhaps the picture of the Rural Church has seemed unduly gloomy. I have not meant it to appear that there is nothing optimistic to be said, for there is. It cannot be denied that the Rural Church has done much to hold Rural Civilization together. However, I am not concerned with this. I am attempting to get at the heart of the problems confronting the Church and enumerate them. Naturally, such an effort will seem to cast a shadow over the whole. We know that clear sunlight on the whole field is necessary to produce rich crops, so I am paying particular attention to the cloud which overcasts a part of the field in the hope that it may be dispelled and the pure sunlight might flood the whole. In the next chapter I shall endeavor to offer solutions for some of these problems, thus looking forward to the day when the Church in the country shall be even more influential than ever before.

CHAPTER III

SOME FACTORS UNDERLYING THE PROGRAM

III.

SOME FACTORS UNDERLYING THE PROGRAM

As we move on to consider a suggested solution of the Rural Church problem we see in these conditions a challenge to truly heroic effort.

"During the past one hundred years, the American people have witnessed within the boundaries of this country a phenomenal economic expansion. Rarely, if ever in history, has wealth of such enormous proportion been so rapidly accumulated - 300 billions, according to the estimate of economists. With such accessible resources of land, forests, and water, there has been every incentive to the American citizen to engross himself exclusively in the getting of wealth. Materialism has had its opportunity. And it could easily made shipwreck of our souls, leaving us with an immense acreage of developed soil, skyscrapers filled with merchandise, factories equipped with the latest inventions, vaults glutted with gold, but no aesthetic sense, no craving for intellectual refinements, and no spirit of adventure or sacrifice. Probably in each of these particulars, we have paid the price and lost much in the domain of the spirit while acquiring so much in the realm of things and stuff. But how much greater would have been the loss if generations of frontier farms and townsmen had not been concerned also in the spiritual realities symbolized by churches, schools and colleges! How effeminate indeed, might our Christianity have become, without the responsibility of establishing institutions commensurate with our economic advance. Who more than the home missionary fresh from the adventure and hardships of the frontier, was the hero listened to by religious conventions and local churches in the East?.....
.....Such disposition as our churches today possess to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ is undoubtedly in no small measure a spiritual heritage coming down to us from the adventures and devotion of the Frontier period.

"Today has its tasks for American Christianity. If the frontier has been churched, perhaps to excess, and colleges in sufficient large numbers established, prob-

lems even more complicated growing out of the urbanizing of our population are now calling for solution. The country, moreover, no longer conventional in its attitude toward the Sabbath and the Church, is calling for a more vital expression of religion..... With such tasks presented to the churches, the spirit of heroism need not die. Great economic expansion undoubtedly lies before the American nation, and correspondingly grave dangers to its spiritual life from the blighting influences usually associated with vast material acquisitions. Hope lies in the fact that the task before the American churches today is just as great as it was one hundred years ago, and the challenge of the heroic has not lost its power. What is supremely needed is an exposition of the bigness of the task that confronts the Churches. The heroic will do the rest." 1

Thus the task before the Church impresses one who has thought deeply upon the problems before us today. Truly the challenge is as great as that which called the pioneer missionaries. There is not always the physical dangers of former days, but there is spiritual danger that calls for the best in us. Thus, rather than being pessimistic regarding the problems we should heed the challenge and fling down the gauntlet to the hosts that would destroy the spiritual values of our life. If the Church serving the community in a social way, as well as spiritual, can contribute to the Kingdom then let us understand how we can best serve and throw our best efforts into the struggle.

Before attempting a solution there are some considerations worth knowing, which will influence the formulation of a program in the Rural Church. Although we may not adopt everything the frontier

Church did in promoting its program, there is one method that we can well adopt. The Frontier Church adapted its methods and men to suit the times and situations, and to be successful the Rural Church must do the same today. The preacher, because of his training, must be the nucleus of the group. The meeting house must be the center of the organized expression of the whole community life. There is a need of ministers who do not constantly shift, but will stay in a community until its life bears the stamp of the character of Jesus. These methods were used by the Frontier Church and I believe they can be used to good advantage today.

The influence of the Rural Church is greater than we think, at first. If it is a live church it occupies a unique position for all the idealism, culture, community spirit and practical social service will center in it. This is because very often there is no other organization that consciously ministers to the moral and spiritual needs of the people.

If this is the case then we can see that the Church must show people the social contribution of an efficient country civilization. Christianity must control industrial concepts and labor to give the workers of the soil the social recognition that has been denied them. Economic justice for the farmer is included in his social appreciation. The Church must have a program that expresses appreciation of the moral resources of the community. It must portray the values of the community, showing those elements which are permanent and make for a richer community life. This means that

the Church must combat the unreasonable individualistic interpretation of life, so often found in the country. Ethics must be socialized, that is, they must be shown to affect not only the individual but the community. Morality must be stated in terms of a wider association. Religion must function in forms of normal service.

One of the problems to which the Country Church must devote herself is the teaching and developing of ideals. The existence of stable tendencies in rural life and thinking lead to a lack of idealism. Poetry, Art and literature are sadly lacking. There often is a lack of sentiment. The forces of nature tend to crush out the ideals, making the chief concern of life the accumulation of enough money to live reasonably well. This absence of idealism undoubtedly contributes to the lack of cooperation in civic causes and social programs.

The essence of religion is to develop aspirations, expanding individual emotions into altruistic impulses, and to teach to measure what is by what ought to be. This is the Church's most difficult task.¹ The preaching of individual salvation, the teaching of denominational creeds, the encouragement of loyalty to sectarian beliefs and dogmas, not only keep the Church from prospering, but rob modern rural civilization of the ideals which other elements of rural civilization have. The type of religion which the Rural Church must teach must no longer be robbed of its birthright. Rural people must no longer be led to think of religion and the Church as restrictions of life, rather they must be given a more abundant life,

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Taylor, C. C.: Rural Sociology. p. 236

by means of a faith and Church that expands its understanding, appreciation and vision of life.

As elsewhere the moral and ethical leadership of the Church is needed in the Rural Community. In the country, if a man goes wrong in the pursuit of a standard of living he is immoral and unethical. If he behaves as a poor citizen he finds himself with no group to which he can turn. The Church must teach and develop moral and ethical judgment so that these tragedies may not occur. Such teaching is needed in the new business and political relations of farmers; also regarding the relations between persons in the same community yet of different economic and social status, concerning sex relations, business relations between members of the community, and recreational relations. To solve these problems, the community needs dynamic moral and ethical leadership.

Thus it is evident that absentee, part-time, short-term pastorates and mere preaching programs are not enough. The Church must have a resident, full time pastor in the community for a period of years, if it is to occupy any such vital place in the life of the community. Only then can it conduct systematic training in moral and ethical ideals, foster religious living, and participate in guiding human adjustments, wherever and whatever they are. Until the Church does this she cannot hope to have the influence she should.

To do this the Church must realize she does not exist for herself. Every item in the program of the Church should be for the community and individual development and improvement. It must make good its right to exist by adequately performing the functions which justified its origin, namely, the abundant life, and fellowship with God and man.

In the previous Chapter we glanced briefly at the psychology of the farmer. In order that we may better understand how the farmer feels and thinks let us again turn to his psychology as we think of the program of the Rural Church. The farmer is practically never influenced by mob-psychology. His buying is not emotional. When he buys it is an article not designed to suit his taste, but to give the greatest amount of service. Fads spread slowly in the country because farmers themselves change slowly. They hear of a new fad only after it has often become passe in the city and as a rule their attitude toward fads is adverse. Fads demand a changing society, else they will not survive. Farmers, with fewer contacts and slower methods, are against them.

However, in the country there is a greater amount of suggestibility than in the city. This is because of the greater homogeneity of race, language, custom and thought, which gives ideas a clear sweep and tends to cause crowd hysteria. Often a whole community will become painfully conscious of a single case of contagious disease, while in the city an epidemic may break out in one section without causing undue alarm. History shows that the country has often been the seat of such hysteria. In the city we find a greater

diversity of life and thought and this acts as a check in the event of any crisis.

While mob-psychology may seldom affect the farmer, and hysteria only in times of crisis, we do find that the farmer is profoundly influenced by public opinion. Public opinion usually rises out of discussion and in the rural community this is usually personal gossip. To be the object of it is a serious matter and one will do well to conform to the standards if he wishes to have the community good-will. Gossip arises because of the lack of reading matter, sane discussions and debates which would help in forming public opinion on matters of larger importance. The Church alive to its task can help in supplying this want by providing such opportunity for discussion and debate.

To what extent is the farmer a part of the public? He finds himself restricted by his community, his occupation, home, etc., and consequently feels that his place is limited. The public is sometimes fickle but the rural population is stable on the whole. There are times when the unified action of the nation is desirable but as a rule the rural people react slowly and often independently. The common way for the public to act is through assemblies and committees but as a rule the farmer does none of these things and follows his own individual opinion and reasoning in the matter. Thus to an extent the farmer is part of the larger public but more often he acts in an individual manner.

As we noted before, the farmer is influenced by his occupation. He works with things, not people. His whole program is adjusted to the dictates of each season. Much of his work is done in comparative solitude and he lives, works, and spends much of his time at home. All this makes him what he is. There is a difference between the person who deals and works with people and the one who has to do with inanimate, unconscious objects. In the former situation there is stimulus and response, while in the latter there is mastery and slavery. The farmer is master of some things, - his home, his beasts, his employees, etc; but he is a slave to others - the forces of nature, etc. To a certain degree his personality is influenced by his contact with others, but not entirely, because these contacts are too few, as a rule. He reflects the effect of his physical environment. His body and mind, subject to the play of a certain influence, come to react in a habitual way to that influence.

We have hinted how he is influenced by the climate and seasons. According to the way weather conditions exist they may be either his friends or his enemies. The late warm rains of spring will aid growth and maturity while warm weather and then a cold snap may destroy a crop. The warm sun will help the corn to ripen but a hail storm of twenty minutes' duration can lay the corn flat upon the ground. Thus, in the way the seasons change, does the farmer regard them as friendly or unfriendly. The instability of climatic conditions from day to day and week to week make the farmer cautious.

This leads the farmer to unconsciously think in terms of the weather. His whole program and plans for the future depend upon it. Often this dependence breeds a fatalistic attitude which has sometimes led him to fall prey to speculators and exploiters because he thinks of the processes of business in the same way.

Let us note again the influence of isolation. As we have seen his home life is isolated, he works alone, and he thinks alone. His convictions are deep rooted and hard to shake. Isolation influences personality. In cases of solitary isolation it has abnormal effects. Such people do not develop the rudimentary social attitudes. Farmers, though not abnormal, lack social contacts and as a result become more staunch and stable than the city people.

However, it would be unfair to say that there is nothing ahead which shall change such conditions. We can see a new rural life already coming. The differences between country and city are not as marked as formerly. The farmer of today has more social and economic contacts. The work of the farm is done more and more by machinery; transportation, through the automobile and good roads, is more rapid; there are better educational opportunities and a wider outlook is his for the taking. The consolidation of schools makes for larger communities and more efficient education. This will mean that the Church will sooner or later be forced to consolidate, not only the open country churches with those of the village, but those within the village itself. When that day comes when all villages will see that the Kingdom of God can best be fur-

thered by such a step, Christianity will take a long stride forward in ministering to the needs of rural people.

All these forward steps have produced a change of attitude. Boys and girls no longer feel that the farm is inevitable for them. Larger educational opportunities have opened all the other professions to them if they desire to follow some other occupation than farming. It is often said that the colleges educate men and women away from the farm but this seems true only to the degree that college gives broader outlook on the world as a whole. It enables farm people to become a part of the larger society and escape the narrowness of former days. It is helping to break down the differences between country and city because college young people mingle with each other and learn to understand one another's views. Thus, out of all these new processes which are finding their way into rural life, a new type of farmer is developing.

Now that we have examined these underlying principles we can now move on to suggesting the methods whereby the Rural Church can best serve the community and build the life which is based upon the principles of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AND THE NEW PROGRAM OF SERVICE AND ORGANIZATION

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Before the Church can take any definite steps in the creation of a program to fit the local needs it must have a knowledge of the social environment of the community. The only sure way to secure such information is by means of a systematic survey. Such a survey must not only show the number of churched and unchurchd people, and the needs of the field in terms of men, money and equipment, but it also must explore the mind of the mind outside the Church. It must discover his attitude toward religion, what he conceives religion to be, etc., and thus be the means of appealing to him with a suitable program. To many such outsiders the Church is a social institution and the Rural Church must prove its right to exist as such. A preacher with a social background who strives to justify the Church and its teaching on the basis of social utility lead the outsider to a new appreciation of the social validity of the Church and at the same time see the validity of Christianity in the lives of men as the means of enabling them to fellowship with God.

The survey must discover the different customs, influences, types of mind, and, thus become a basis for determining how the desired results can be obtained. It is important that we preach idealism, play on the emotions, and picture the

results of better living. However, we must also study the actual conditions, laws and modes of events and social change, else the end will be illusion.¹ Thus only will the desire for community betterment and the construction of a real community life justify the survey. If it is used merely to pry into the lives and thought of people, simply to collect a body of facts then it is better never to take the first step.

When we think of "survey" we immediately ask ourselves what kind of surveys can be made and what method we shall use. It is usually advisable to have a preliminary survey, one which gathers data upon which a more intensive survey can be based at a later time. Probably the most satisfactory survey, after the preliminary, is the partial method. This type will examine only one or a few phases of the community life such as social, religious, and sanitary conditions. The practical type is that which is not interested in a knowledge of the facts alone, but comes out of the consciousness that some one thing is not as it should be. It seeks to get at the bottom of the matter, to determine its true nature, its prevalence, and then to discover some way of remedying the situation.

The opposite of this is the scientific survey which is primarily concerned with accumulating facts and then arriving at scientific conclusions. This type is probably the least valuable of all to the Church which contemplates a survey. Lastly, there

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Brunner: The Church and the Agricultural Crisis. p. 35

is the comprehensive method which delves into the essential phases of community life. It examines the physiography, religion, social life, aesthetic tastes, sanitary conditions, educational advantages, and financial conditions, etc. Usually, this is too great a task for one church to undertake. Such an effort should be made with the combined forces of the churches of the community, or with the aid of other organizations interested in community enrichment.¹

In preparing for the survey the territory to be covered should be outlined. The natural center is that place to which the largest number of people go for the largest number of commodities. The census will be taken in the homes which turn to it. Besides taking a census of the homes in the community it is profitable to survey the organizations within the community and list each for the purpose of comparing them with the home census and the extent to which they satisfy home needs. Thus the social activities of each home in the community will be charted. When the results are in they should be charted on separate sheets so the information will be more intelligible. A list of such maps or charts might be a newspaper map, community events map, library map, telephone map, school map, church map, Sunday School attendance map, community organizations map with colored seals to correspond to a similar seal for all homes connected with them. This is only suggestive, the list can be made much more complete, depending upon the needs.

¹ I have appended a form suggested by Prof. O. J. Kern, of the Dept. of Agricultural Economics of the University of California. See Appendix A.
 Brunner: Surveying Your Community - also contains suggestions for such blanks.

When the survey is complete the data must be interpreted by a small group of open minded and educated persons who have ability. They should be able to understand all the cross currents and aspects of community life so that it can be interpreted aright. After this interpretation and evaluation the report should be published so that all can read it. In such a report no names should be given, simply the figures and deductions. Numbers can be used to designate any name to which more than one reference is made.

Out of the interpretation of the data the Church can build the program needed. The report should show not only what is in the community, but what ought to be. Striking contrasts of this kind can easily be presented by charts, photos and the like.

In making a survey it is vitally essential that the surveyors possess the proper qualifications in order that they might secure the best results. Surveyors should be chosen with the following qualifications in mind. They should be friendly and cordial. As they go from home to home they will encounter suspicion and reticence and they must be able to overcome this so that the necessary data may be secured. They must be open minded, with an interest in the facts as they are. Under no circumstances should their own attitudes or opinions be allowed to enter into any data secured. A canvasser must be critical. Human beings are prone to exaggerate and many statements will bear this mark. One must learn to evaluate testimony and check it with that of others, thus arriving at the approximate actual facts. Another qualification is that of accuracy.

He must be precise in his use of terms and written comments. No slip should appear in his record of data. Along with this should go alertness. One without this qualification might miss many valuable facts. Often a chance remark will open hitherto unknown channels for the interviewer and skillful questioning will give a better understanding. A skillful surveyor will be alert for such remarks and ready to follow them up. A final, but none the less important, qualification is sympathy with the attitudes and experience of the people. One who is unsympathetic with rural people is in danger of underevaluating the results of his work. This must be guarded against.¹ People having these qualifications can be recruited out of the leaders of the Church and community at large. Such a worthwhile project will call forth the best leadership of the community and may be the means of enlisting them in work in the Church when the survey is completed.

It is well, at this point, to sound a note of warning to surveyors. This work requires much tact and common sense. Rural people are conservative and the surveyor must assure them that their answers are confidential, especially in financial matters. Antagonisms and neighborhood jealousies, such as carrying gossip from house to house in the collection of the data, must be avoided. Information secured must be told to no one, either during the survey or after. In publication personal factors must be distinguished

¹The above qualifications are taken from Brunner: Surveying Your Community - p.24, 25. This is an excellent handbook for those contemplating a survey and a careful reading will well repay one's efforts in the valuable suggestions and helps given.

from the social. Certain facts can be told without resentment, e.g. the number of children in a certain district, or the number of silos. Unless the surveyor realizes the responsibility of the task at hand, he, or she, has no moral, or other, right to do the work. Done rightly the survey is of great importance to community welfare; done poorly or indiscretely and it may result in great harm.

Out of the results of the survey the Church must build a program which will meet and remedy the community needs. While it is dangerous to offer suggestions for a program, I venture to suggest the Par Standards for the Rural Church which feels the need of striving for a goal, yet is not sure what may be striven for. Some things are doubtless already achieved but many will not be. Of course, they cannot be had in a years time, all of the, but therein lies the value of the Par Standards. They offer the basis for a constructive and progressive program for a number of years in advance.¹

We have seen how villages have become overchurched and how problems have arisen which hinder the progress of the Church. We have also noted how village and town churches have lost sight of the marginal people and consequently fail to minister to them. At the present time church leaders, and many in the local churches, are awakening to the fact that something must be done to reach these people and preserve them for the Kingdom of God. What is the method we must adopt in order to perform this supremely important task?

¹ See Appendix B, for an outline of the Par Standards.

The boundaries of the neighborhood and community are wider than ever before. Formerly it was limited to a certain geographical area containing those families in comparatively close contact with each other. Now, by means of improved transportation the community has burst the limitations of mere geographical areas and has pressed beyond them into what are known as service areas. That is, the area served by the center to which the inhabitants of that area usually turn for their needs.

These service areas should teach the Church something. The area served by any public service, e.g. telephone, mail routes, schools, etc., is the area which can be most efficiently served from a given center. The Church should consider this. Is its service to be confined merely to the center or is it to move out into the surrounding country in its effort to accomplish the most?

It seems to me that the only satisfactory way of serving the marginal peoples is by means of the Larger Parish Plan. This Plan is one that specializes in ministering to the people of a large area with the obligation to serve everyone living therein. In reality it is the old circuit rider plan brought up to date with new equipment and greater usefulness. When it is adopted by a given field the minister feels obligated to serve one church and a particular people. He is also filled with a passion to serve larger areas. He becomes a community builder, a local statesman and a rural engineer, as well as a preacher.¹

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Dana: Larger Parish Plan (Country Life Bulletin #2). p. 5.

The Larger Parish Plan would not work in thickly settled regions where the churches would not unite. It is not intended for such conditions. It is adapted to a widely scattered population where one church, through its branches and staff can serve an area large enough so that all families can contribute to the support of a larger and more efficient organization.

Naturally, in determining an area to be served, it must be selected with the view of serving the area with the greatest efficiency. Different factors enter into determination of the limits of the area. One of the first considerations should be that of the topography. A unit limited by topographical conditions would likely be more unified and easily served. Yet the Plan is intended to serve those isolated by these very conditions. Thus it must not be a hard and fast rule that the area is limited by the topography of the land. Distances and roads have their influence. The coming of better roads and the auto has served to draw areas together and distances which formerly were prohibitory are now travelled as part of the day's work. Yet in some places the houses are so scattered that there are no churches or schools. The only way of ministering to them is to go to each home for religious services and instruction. The easiest area to serve is probably the trade area. People who go to one center for trading are the most likely to be unified and have similar interests and most easily served by the Larger Parish. Areas of similar faith are also easy to serve. The interdenominational Larger Parish is a recent development and is one of the most hopeful

trends in the Rural Church. Denominational headquarters are reporting that churches are becoming more and more concerned in co-operation in a given field. Such a development will eliminate the waste of previous years. The wisest way to build up a Larger Parish Area is gradually to add to its extent and services. One should begin at the center and move out. As time shows its worth larger areas and more churches can be added.¹

As to the organization and program of the Larger Parish, it can be most clearly shown by the following diagram. The program is self explanatory for as can be seen, the program of each division is given.² (See next page)

¹

Dana, M.: The Larger Parish Plan (Country Life Bulletin#2) p. 6, 7

² Ibid p. 9.

THE COMMUNITY
INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, NEIGHBORHOODS, TOWNS, TRADE AREAS

LARGER PARISH COUNCIL

COOPERATING CHURCHES

COOPERATING DISTRICTS

STAFF
Minister of Worship
Minister of Parish Activities
Minister of Education

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Minister and in-
terested laymen

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minister and in-
terested laymen

PARISH ACTIVITIES
COMMITTEE

Minister and in-
terested laymen

WORSHIP SERVICES
Regular Church
Sunday School
Midweek Services
Family Altar
SPECIAL SEASONS
Christmas and
Easter
Consecrations
PASTORAL SERVICES
Systematic and
Primary
DEPUTATION TEAMS
Coming in or loc-
al going out
MISSIONS
PASTOR'S CLASSES

CHURCH SCHOOLS
DISTRICT SUNDAY SCHOOL
HOME DEPARTMENT
VACATION SCHOOL
WEEKDAY SCHOOL
PAGEANTRY
LEADERSHIP TRAINING,
CONFERENCES AND
SCHOOLS
COOPERATION WITH SEC-
ULAR SCHOOLS TO PRO-
VIDE ACTUAL CHRIS-
TIAN EDUCATION
ADULT EDUCATION
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE'S
COUNCIL
4-H CLUBS
OUTING CLUBS
SCOUTS
MOTION PICTURES
DRAMATICS
COMMUNITY SINGING
FARM SOCIALS
SCHOOL PLAY PERIODS
CARNIVALS
ORGANIZED ATHLETICS
CAMPS
LEADERSHIP CLASS
COMMUNITY STUDIES

OBJECTIVE: An increasingly better economic, social and spir-
itual community life.

The principle of the Larger Parish Plan is that it does things with folks rather than for them. It is a representative partnership, giving the people an opportunity to manage community affairs. Such a method promotes the "we" feeling and gives a "felt" ownership. These elements are highly desirable in a rural community. Another thing, it promotes team play in religion. Selfish interests will be forgotten. Unjust feelings and jealousies between neighborhoods, town and country will tend to vanish. Instead everyone will be concerned with performing a common Christian task. It will be a religion concerned with every phase of community life, commanding respect, winning support, and attracting a stronger following with each progressive step. Thus it will interest those whom the older Church program did not interest.¹

Before the Larger Parish can be a success in any section three elements must exist. First is the ability and disposition of the pastor. If he is willing to move out from his central location, seeking to serve all the people within a ten mile radius, studying their needs and serving everyone, the work of the Larger Parish will grow. Then there is the financial consideration. There must be the means to make a wider work possible. As a rule people in outlying areas are reluctant to contribute a work which is centered in one particular location. A better procedure is to enlist the financial support of the people in the centers by convincing them of the need

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A very complete, yet brief, discussion of the Larger Parish Plan and its several phases will be found in Dana's: The Larger Parish Plan (Country Life Bulletin #2) issued by the Town and Country Departments of the Congregational Church Extension Boards, 287 4th Ave., New York, N.Y.

of the outlying districts. When the outside people see that those of the center are willing to work with them, sending them a religious and social program rather than asking them to come to the center for everything, they will be more ready to help financially.

Lastly, and this has been touched on, the minister must arouse the interest of the village and townspeople in these areas. Not alone in financial matters, but in the matter of volunteer leadership as well. The villages and towns offer a nucleus for organization and leadership and thus may have a wider field of service.¹

Instead of blaming the last pastor for the closing of an open country church it would be more Christian to bring such under a Larger Parish with a strong religious organization at some community, with a resident pastor and one or two assistant pastors to work the outlying territory. The plan could be adopted as a denominational policy and the people would advance a long step forward. How much more such a policy would be in keeping with the spirit of Jesus. Let me quote Brunner in this connection.²

"Even today, when no official pronouncement has been made, it is only fear that holds back many a denominational official from attempting just this thing in known territory -- in the last analysis, fear of the year book. God pity his Church! Imagine Jesus afraid of a year book, imagine Him regarding a statistical loss over against a spiritual gain!"

Strong words these, but they drive straight through the heart of the problem. The crying need is for spiritual gain and if it means loss of churches to some denomination then let us have it.

¹ Wilson: The Farmer's Church. p. 242-246.

² The Church and the Agricultural Crisis. p. 40.

In the country there is a great need that directed recreation have as its goal the socialization of the community, not only in play, but in other activities as well. Play is probably the greatest force in existence for breaking down social barriers such as individualism, prejudices and jealousies, and putting in their place a spirit of team play, cooperation, helpfulness and understanding. Thus we see the need of recreational program, wisely directed, to draw country people together.

What is recreation? A great many different ideas exist as to what recreation truly is. Recreation is any activity, whether mental or physical, which affords us harmless, yet fruitful, enjoyment of our leisure hours.

A good many people, looking at the active life of the farmer during the growing and harvesting seasons, believe that the farmer needs no recreation, that his life is active enough. However, farmers need it most of all. Not physical recreation always, but social and mental activities. They need to take care of both sides of their beings. They must be mentally alert and socially minded as well as physically able to perform their work. During the busy seasons of planting, cultivating and harvesting their work is never done, but in the winter months, when there are only chores to be done, the men folk have leisure time which might be profitably filled.

When questioned on the matter, farm men and women express a craving for social and recreational enjoyment. However, they feel

that it cannot be had unless it comes from a professional group, such as a chatauqua, road show, movie, etc. They fail to realize that they have the means of much more profitable recreation right at hand. There is the school, church, or community center as a meeting place; and leadership is usually available in the form of the teacher, minister or some other interested person. Home talent is usually waiting to be developed and programs which feature such talent are always much more enjoyable and really contribute to the life of those taking part and to the community as a whole. It would not be advisable for some one group to take the lead in every event. Everyone should be given a chance, thus a more varied type of leadership can be developed.

Most communities lack adequate equipment for an ideal social program. In most cases they think they cannot afford it. Really, it is due to a lack of vision. Adequate recreational equipment and supervision costs less than the money expended in seeking it in distant places. More money is spent in going to distant places for entertainment and social life than it would cost to provide a community center at home, adequately equip it and supervise its activities. Furthermore, we must look at the moral side of it. The moral cost of finding recreation beyond the limits of the local community is incalculable.

The difficulty in raising sufficient funds will be greatly lessened if these values can be visualized in their proper perspectives. Public opinion often wonders at the presence of evil, the

ugly rumors that come in from the outside concerning the conduct of their young people in other places and so on; but it does not always consider the causes - a lack of proper recreational equipment to offset the conditions.

Often a certain amount of equipment is available but if any program approximating adequacy is attempted it soon becomes evident that overcrowding is handicapping the program. This is the best argument for expansion and new equipment. Let the program grow beyond the facilities and do it with gladness. Doing this will crystallize public opinion in favor of more facilities. The leaders must emphasize greater use of lawns, river banks, large barns, groves and homes for entertainment and social programs. There is a wholesome spirit about such places if properly conducted programs are furnished. If we can conserve the lives of our young people through recreational activities no expense is too great to fulfill it.

There are some communities which are so conscious of the need of adequate social life that the different organizations and clubs cannot find enough nights to carry on this social program. This gives rise to petty jealousies which are often unnecessary. It is evident that there is a need of greater cooperation in working out a community recreation program. The different organizations should unite in a common program and the Church should work with all that seek to develop the community life. This will strengthen the program and religion.¹

¹ Roadman, E. A.: The Country Church and its Program. p. 107

Rather than competing for vacant evenings for their several programs it would be much better if the leaders of the institutions and organizations concerned would get together and work out the aims, goals, and methods for community recreation, and then cooperate in carrying them out. No group or section should be left out; all should have equal opportunity to present their programs. If one group says that it cannot work with another it must be reminded that its children go to the same school as the children of the other group, and eventually some will intermarry. They all live in the same community and must seek common ideals and points of agreement. The only way out is by the fullest cooperation between all the groups within the community boundaries. It can be done and is being done in many communities.

Although communities may look to the different institutions to provide recreation, a grave danger threatens the community if recreation becomes institutionalized; if it is thought necessary to find amusement in community institutions rather than at home. The play life of the child in the country should be largely at home. There is no substitute for home supervision and guidance. Within the realm of home recreation may be included parties, special celebrations, and neighborhood events.

"It is a sad commentary on the home life when children associate good times solely with going somewhere" ¹

The Church has a great responsibility here. It must recognize the primary importance of the home. The Church can make a great con-

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Roadman: The Country Church and its Program. p. 108.

tribution to community life by creating larger unity within the home by standing ready to assist in any way, the home to plan its recreation program. When the Church does this it is unifying the one social unit upon which it can draw in the future for workers. This is one of the most important things the Church can do in promoting the recreational life of the community.

As the Church goes about formulating a community recreation program there are some factors that must be taken into consideration in order that it be adequate. If there is no neighborhood center the Church must furnish the facilities. It is not at all amiss that the clubs discussing the serious side of agriculture and household arts, debating societies, etc., meet in the Church. Singing societies, drama clubs, lectures on helpful topics are important and well established aids to community pleasure and advancement, and should certainly find a place in the Church program. Then the Church must consider special day festivals. These can be observed with pageantry, upon which the whole neighborhood and community should unite for a worthwhile good time. The Church can also be of great help in providing outdoor fun for old and young. This can be in the form of community or Sunday School picnics, camping trips for various groups, nature study classes, and water sports. In every community there will be found those non-commercial clubs in agriculture and the household arts that will bring young people together and encourage better farming and living. While the Church will not promote these programs it can lend its whole hearted support to any of them because it knows that as farming methods and living conditions improve the young people will

become more contented and the Church will be assured of vital leaders and members in the future. Furthermore, the religious faith and living of these young people will be enriched by showing them that religion is bound up in life in every phase. If the Church does not promote them itself as a part of its program, it can cooperate with the leaders of such organizations as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and the like. In the field of athletics the Church can take the lead, promoting wholesome and healthy athletic contests and leagues. Such a program begins with the local playground and extends into a county system, planned to encourage physical fitness and good times for all boys, girls, young people and adults, rather than the success of a few after unlimited competition. This is but a brief suggestive statement of the possible fields open to the Church with a recreational program which is community centered.

Plans for social occasions should begin days in advance in order that the program might be adequate. A haphazard and poorly planned social program is doomed from the start. Not only this but the poor impression it makes may cause loss of influence upon the part of the Church. There is no reason why this should happen for there are many books on the subject, offering many fine suggestions which will give the group an evening of wholesome fun and good companionship. These books can be had from nearly any publish-

ing house.¹ No better opportunity for developing the local leadership is offered than in planning the recreational programs. Young people enjoy the work, often volunteering to assist in programs for younger children. Leadership in play is as native to many as play itself. Wise leaders in the Church will consider the training of leaders in recreation as one of their responsibilities. To do this leadership conferences and training schools should be held in every community.

Any Church which plans recreation for the whole community will find it well to formulate certain aims and goals to be striven for in every program. The following are a few suggested goals and aims, adaptable, of course, to local needs. They should be definite and workable principles. Regular play days for the whole community should be planned. It is not too much to ask that weekly half holidays from store and farm be maintained in order that the whole community have the opportunity to enter into the program. This is not impossible for experience shows that helpers work better when they have a half holiday to look forward to.²

More liesure requires more supervision. This must include

¹ A few suggested books are given here:
 Riesner, C.F.: Social Plans for Young People. Abingden Press, \$1.50;
 "Handy", Church Recreation Service, 510 Wellington Ave., Chicago, Ill., about \$2.25; "The Kit", supply by the same address as "Handy", comes in pamphlet form, a year's membership costing \$2.50.; Moxay, M.E.: Leadership for Girls Activities, Methodist Book Concern, San Francisco, \$.60. This is more on the training for leadership. Davies, J.W.F.: Out of Doors with Youth, Univ. of Chicago Press, \$1.50; Miller, C.A.: Stunt Night Tonight, Doubleday Doran, Garden City, N.Y. \$1.50; Rohrbough, K.F.: Successful Stunts, Richard Smith, Inc., New York, \$1.50.

² Roadman: The Country Church and its Program. p. 109

the planning of a complete schedule of intercommunity events. This will bring communities together and broaden acquaintance, eliminating jealousies and barriers, which may have been erected. It might be advisable that competitive programs be avoided as much as possible, at least at first, lest any barriers, misunderstandings and so on be more intensified. Inter-community cooperation and fellowship is the objective to be striven for.

Another aim of the Church should be the discovery and development of leadership and talent within the play and social circles. This should be emphasized more. The community activities of music, drama, etc., are the best means of such development in the various activities. The social sin of the age is the waste of human powers through a lack of development and the Church will render untold service by calling out and developing all talent. More community entertainment should be given by home talent. The local children's day, in the Chatauqua, when the local children furnish the entertainment, is the most popular of all and shows what real pleasure can be derived from local talent.

It is not always possible to get a good class of professional entertainment and the country must draw upon its own resources, developing its own opportunities to satisfy the social craving. While it cannot develop a standard as high as the professional entertainer, it can get far more benefit from its own contribution. The tendency to rely upon imported professionals for all entertainment is a mark of social deterioration and the Church will do well to bring rural

people back to a better appreciation of what people can do for themselves.¹

I have emphasized this matter of recreation and social life, not because the country has not had any life of this kind, but because there is such a crying need for socialized and cooperative recreation. If the Church is to be a socializing institution it must assume leadership in the matter of community recreation.

I have spoken of "socialization" and community cooperation as being essential if any adequate community program is to be formulated and carried on with any degree of success. When we consider the individualism, suspicion, and lack of cooperation which are found in the average community; and the poverty of community life resultant from these attitudes we say with a good deal of emphasis that some institution or group must undertake the task of socializing the community. If none other does, why not the Church?

By socialization I mean the process whereby a group of rural people living in a territorial area become really acquainted with one another and learn to work together for the good of the community. It is the creation of a "we" feeling among people. Because of the background and heritage of rural people it is necessary to carry on an educational program before any real progress can be made in bringing about any degree of socialization. The educational process will embody three progressive elements, the third being the desired end. There will be the consciousness of a need. We must first bring to the

¹ Grover, E.R.: The Rural Mind and Social Welfare. p. 174.

attention of people the needs which exist. By emphasizing these people will at last admit that something should be done. This leads to the desire to satisfy the need. As people become aware of what exists and what ought to be some will feel the desire to remedy the conditions. This sympathy must radiate to the whole group until it becomes a part of their thinking. The last element, and the goal, is intelligent action to do the things that ought to be done, with adaptation to local conditions. When this takes place, people have become socialized in their thought and action.

In order to create the socialized attitude, there must be certain necessary ideals. There must be the development of like mindedness, as we have just seen. When a diversity of interests and opinions exists there cannot be cooperation. The press, schools and churches can do much in breaking down the latter condition and creating likemindedness. There must also be the ideal of human brotherhood, as taught by Christianity. The Church has found that separation from the ideal of brotherhood has been a detriment to her influence. When the ideal is upheld by the Church, she is powerful. The village as well as the city needs it, especially where class distinctions appear. Only with a democratic spirit can rural life be supreme. Another ideal is cooperation for the common good. Cooperation for social good is still lacking. The Church, in the socializing process, must promote a community spirit and interest, for human needs can be provided for most economically in this way. Once people get used to working

together they will find life richer and the old class distinctions will disappear.¹

As a result of the years of pioneering and isolation, when men were thrown upon their own resources and had to struggle against terrific odds to keep alive, a "balked instinct" has arisen. It was a gradual stopping up of life until the isolation of farm life has resulted in atrophy. The challenge which comes to the Church which is awake to its opportunities is that of breaking down this feeling and bringing about a community spirit.

To do this the Church must discover the rural group with which the first steps can be taken, for socialization must have a group of people. Preferably this group will be small, because the members can get together with the greatest ease. The discovery of such a group means the careful study of the results of the survey, for the survey discovers not only needs, but people as well. All rural people have, or have had, some group of social arrangement. There are common interests that appeal to a certain group and this has unified them, etc. Consequently their chief characteristic is a consciousness of unity, i.e. they have a common social mind, the "we" feeling, made up of the body of sentiments and ideas common to the group.

Once this social mind is discovered the Church must develop it along lines of constructive cooperation. This must be

¹
Vogt, F.L.: Introduction to Rural Sociology. p. 389-391

done through education. The steps in this education are the same as in the socializing process, in fact they work together. It must be done by bringing in social suggestions of what other groups are doing; by presenting these ideas in such a way that it will result in a social hunger for something better; then the people must be persuaded to act on this hunger and work to realize their desire, not for the good of one particular group, but for the community.

In this discussion of the socialization of the rural community one may well ask, "What place has the Church as socializing agency?" After all this is a new conception of the work of the Church. In days past it has been thought of merely as an institution ministering to the spiritual needs of people, a place of preaching, Sunday School and an occasional social function. However, our conception of the nature of the Kingdom of God and the place of religion in the life of people has undergone such a change that we see the Church supplying a place of worship but also going into every activity of life and subjecting everything to a close study in the light of Jesus' teaching and character.

This integration of religion in life through a socialized program may seem merely a social program but that is only the means to the larger end of a community united in its fellowship with God and striving to perform its share in the Kingdom building. What, then, can the Church do, what ideals can it hold before the community as it takes the lead in the socialization of life?

In 1924 the American Country Life Association formulated a set of ideals for the Country Church which would aid in building its program. As a statement of social ideals I believe they are most suggestive.

"We believe that the rural church should lead its community in raising all the standards of every phase of life, - business, politics, social ideals, etc."

To the farmer this will mean:

- "1. The exercise of careful stewardship of the fertility of his soil. This is a moral obligation for the future good of rural society. Exploitation of fertility is working a hardship upon future generations.
2. The practice of efficient and intelligent farming. Many farmers today are not taking advantage of the scientific methods of greater and better production.
3. The efficient market of useful goods. The farmer must raise and market the things people need and demand.
4. Preparation of himself for intelligent citizenship. It is the duty of everyone to vote and the Church should encourage it.
5. The conscientious exercise of the duties of good parenthood. As the contacts between city and country increase so will the danger that parents will surrender some of the birthrights of parenthood to certain institutions. The Church will do well to insist upon the family as the primary unit and endeavor to uphold the home as the center of life."

On the hand, this statement goes on to point out, the consumer should guarantee the farmer, in the name of a Christian Social Order:

- "1. The right of the self determination of the social order in his own community.
2. A recognized place in the goodwill and public opinion of the nation.

3. An opportunity, through cooperative activity, to win a measure of economic power.
4. A system of education taking account of the cultural needs of the American farmer.
5. A political order in which the farmer's vote should count for projects vital to his needs.
6. A system of religious organization adapted to the necessities of rural community life."

In a socialized program of Christian work the Church will attempt to create Christian attitudes in the farmers. It will seek to develop constructive thinking, on his part, which will help to raise moral values in every phase of activity. In the past, farmers have seldom conceived of how they conduct their farms as having any moral significance. But show the farmer that what he does now will have its influence upon the future, that how he conducts his affairs and the ideals he erects, may have untold effect in days to come, not only in his own family, but the community as well, and he will begin some hard, serious thinking.

The Church is always interested in Stewardship. It teaches its adherents to contribute of their material goods, urging them to do so in a true Christian spirit of thanksgiving that they have such to give. The Church urges them to serve in the Church program, giving of their abilities in leadership as well. But in all this talk of Stewardship how often has the "Stewardship of Soil" been brought home to them? And yet it is of fundamental importance for a starved soil means poor crops, poor crops mean little money, and little money means small contributions and a lack of effectiveness on the

part of the church. The Church must teach the farmer that there is such a thing as "soil salvation", for this has its influence on everything in his life - his home and standard of living, and his social life. An abundant family, social, and religious life depend upon the fertility of the soil.

This does not mean that a pastor must be a specialist in soil values and producing qualities, fertilizer, crop rotation, cultivation, etc., because the farm bureaus and Agricultural Colleges of the state can do that so much better. The thing the Church must do is teach the Christian principle of Stewardship, the necessity of building up the fertility of the soil as a means of securing an abundant life and higher standards for each successive generation.

The Church can also teach the moral values of marketing - honest packing, weight, and grading. The Church cannot afford to stand apart from social movements that are the very life of the people. Rather it must insist that it be given the opportunity to apply Christian principles to them. Cooperatives are a part of a social movement among farmers today. What shall the Church do? Shall it stand aside and remain silent? No. It should urge that people join them and use its influence to make them even more beneficial. The Church, in its program of cooperative community effort, will identify itself with every social movement which makes for the enrichment of life. Not only should it identify itself, it should bring them into being, thus becoming more aggressive in its role of Christianizing the community.

Summing up, the Church must emphasize team play. Unless there is community cooperation there can be no suitable moral program. No community can function adequately in isolation. The Church then, must discover the ways to bring the community together to share in the common task. It can do this by identifying itself with every activity of the people and leading them on step by step until they are working together, not simply because their ideals are for the good of the community, but because they are Christian. This, then, is the work of the Church in the socializing process and work of the community.

This socializing process, and the creation of new efforts on the part of the people in a cooperative manner will inevitably result in committees and groups to carry on the work. As time passes the Church is apt to find herself overburdened with these organizations and unable to move on into the new fields that may open. Hence, such organizations will have to come under community auspices. But the danger lies in the fact that there is apt to be lost motion and a lack of common effort. Each is apt to feel it is working alone and will fail to understand the work and accomplishments of the others. There comes to us the need of community organization.

In organizing a community to serve the needs there is the danger that people will want to organize too much. The result will be an overabundance of organizations having little social value because of their duplication of effort. They will spend their time in making the wheels go but will accomplish little. The community

which has within it several groups performing definite tasks in community welfare will feel the need of a central organization which may integrate the work of all.

A few practical suggestions¹ concerning procedure in laying the groundwork for community organization will not be amiss. One thing is to avoid too much publicity before hand. It is better to act quietly and use the publicity to show what has been accomplished. Another thing, let the original group who make the plans be a small one of really interested people. This group can talk things over quietly. One must guard against one or two doing all the talking. Of course, there is always the danger that such a discussion will breed intolerance but the danger must be risked and discussion carried on if there is to be any progress. No proposition must ever be "railroaded" through. It must be held up for criticism and discussion. Only after such criticism and remolding do we have the expression of the community mind. There should be advance planning for the meeting to avoid aimlessness, but not with the intention of pushing through any proposal without discussion by all. After all the groundwork comes the public meeting when the plans are made public and further discussion and criticism are carried on. When the plans are approved by the community we have an expression of its will and are then ready to go forward with whatever plan, or form, of community organization which will meet the needs.

For purposes of illustration I have appended schematic

¹ These are the suggestions given by Prof. O. J. Kern in Agricultural Economics in the University of California.

diagrams of two different community organizations. These are given by Professor Kern of the University of California as been suggestive. The first form is that of the Community Club. This form is essentially democratic. Every member has a voice in the discussion of any problem. It is best adapted to the small community which has little organization.¹ The other form is best adapted to the small city or large rural community which is organized and needs a strong central organization to centralize community activities. This form is not purely a democratic one, rather it is a democracy by representation. The individuals in the various groups or organizations are represented by delegate in the Community Council.² There is not space here to devote to a full discussion of these two forms hence, the two diagrams must suffice. The accompanying constitutions will also serve to make clear the different functions and the organization of each. I have simply given the distinguishing factor concerning representation in each form.

In every community we find clubs for both men and women. These clubs are either social or they may have some phase of the community program as their function.

Probably the most common is the men's club. In them relations are usually democratic and have as members the best men of the community. Such organizations should continue to be social, having an amusement program on a high level which gives relief from the duties of the day. They can probably contribute most to the community

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See Appendix C

² See Appendix D

welfare in this way. A form of organization for men which can be of great help in many matters is the men's club in the Church. Such a club can supply leaders for the recreational and social program, assist in the work of the Church School and a number of other ways. Little is know concerning theeffectiveness of men's Church organizations because they have not been tried. However, the Church which values the backing of the men and recognizes their power in the administration will make every effort to furnish such an organization.

The Church should naturally be inter^ested in these Community farmer's organizations and will give its hearty support in order that their programs might be Christian. This is a part of the Church's task as a socializing agency. If the Church has done its work well and has permeated the clubs with the Christian spirit we will see this expressed in a number of ways. The farmer's club that is Christian should ask for fair play, not special privelege, as has been common, in their demand for equality. They must avoid getting things because they are to their own advantage only. Too often such things are obtained at the disadvantage of others. Such a club should cultivate sympathy for other groups, especially for organized labor, which farmers do not understand, because they have not had the problems, and consequently blame for the higher prices. They need to understand the merchants, bankers, and others and consider their interests as well. The organizations should stress the maximum efficiency of all farmers. By reducing competition and promoting produce which has a steady demand this efficiency will be produced. The club should mobilize sentiment on behalf of the great-

est national good. It is a Christian obligation and duty to lead the entire group to working for the good of the entire country. Lastly, a Christian spirited organization must avoid class consciousness and prejudices which, in the past, have prevented co-operation and work for the community and nation as a whole.

When we come to the matter of women's clubs in the rural community we find that little has been done as a whole, and more should be done. Formerly, the farm woman has been confined to the home with little opportunity for social life. This has been due to tradition which said she should stay at home, and to conditions of labor which required all her efforts to do the daily work. In recent years, through changing social conditions and concepts, and improvements in home equipment which ease woman's labor, her status has greatly changed. Modern influences tend to lessen the home influence on children and women, if they are to fulfill their obligation and exert the influence necessary, must broaden their knowledge. Such knowledge must cover all the fields of the activities of young people. Also, they should take an interest in the social and political conditions to secure the best conditions for their children.

These things can best be learned in a Club which, as a group, studies and considers those things they feel are desirable. Such a club, properly organized, can lift the moral tone of the village, and make a real contribution to the community welfare in all its phases. Many women's clubs have a fine record along such lines. Women take more interest in community affairs and needs, when bound

by loyalty to a club, and in most cases are the main influence which brings changes for the better. In the past about the only women's societies have been the Ladies Aid and the Missionary Society. While these are of great value to the local Church, their influence does not extend into the community. The Church should not discourage these two societies, but in addition should lend its support to outside women's organizations which are endeavoring to make the community life better and more Christian.

Therefore, in all community organization, in all men's and women's clubs, the general purpose should be to socialize the people. The most valuable citizens are the social minded. Close personal relationships breed fairness of treatment and a sympathetic spirit and mutual appreciation which gives meaning to life. Much remains to be done along this line in the future and all must work for it, the Church not simply tagging along, but aggressively and constructively leading the community.

A problem which vitally affects the Church and the effectiveness of any program it might seek to promote, is the economic problem. The Church which would enter more completely and intimately into the community life will become familiar with these problems. It will encourage better farming and crops, cooperative marketing and buying, etc. It will do everything possible to make the economic life a more stable one.

The community which has become socialized in its activities

will soon turn its attention to production. Probably this will be one of the talking points as the socialized program is presented, and will be one of the first problems attacked. It should be a community idea of production. By this I mean that the farmers of a given locality should be encouraged to turn their attention to the crops for which their locality is best fitted and grow nothing else, except such necessities as are the community's and their own. Furthermore, they should grow these things with the idea of producing a uniform quality which is the best. This will bring about a better adaptation of the land to crops, improve the methods of agriculture and promote the common ends of agriculture.

This community method of production and cooperation will have certain results. It will result in the use of the best farm methods in the whole community. In a community where the farmers realize they are specializing in a certain form of production, if a farmer thinks he is falling behind he will attempt greater efficiency, and every farmer doing this will raise the entire level of efficiency. A result of community cooperation and greater efficiency in method a farmer will select the best seed only because the whole community is striving for the best alone. In the use of farm machinery there is a great opportunity for community cooperation. Modern farm machinery is much more efficient than the old type. It will be possible for the community to own a certain amount of such machinery, hiring a man to do the ploughing, threshing, etc. This may sound Utopian but in certain places it has actually been worked out.¹ Electric power is the great need of the

¹ Butterfield, K. L.: The Farmer and the New Day. p. 147-151

farm, yet if farmers act individually they will experience great difficulty in getting cheap electricity. As a group they might produce their own power, although in most cases this is not advisable; but they certainly could make better contracts with the power companies than as individuals. These are only a few of the results to show what is meant by cooperation in production. Many others will also arise.

However, all this community cooperation in production will not improve things much if the farmers do not get a good price for their produce. Then there is the necessity of the community idea in distribution. Farmers are learning the necessity of collective bargaining and marketing. To facilitate this we have the cooperative which acts as a central clearing house for the produce of the community.

Efficiency in marketing the product requires standardization, through the use of the best varieties, scientific grading, etc. A community trademark which is used on all standard products will designate them as such. There is always a more ready market for goods that are of a known quality than for those which make no effort to standardize.

Collective bargaining for prices is much more effective than individual effort. One seller cannot deal with a buyer as effectively as a community with a standard product. The farmer is entitled to better prices than he has received in the past and the co-

operative marketing system will enable him to get them. It is to be understood that the Church is not interested in this matter simply for the sake of money, in fact, that is the last thing it should emphasize as supremely desirable. It is interested to the extent that when a man has an income sufficient to give him the necessities and comforts of life he will be more friendly toward a Church which attempts to aid in the solution of his problems. Such financial return is in accordance with the Christian view.

What shall we say, then, about Christianizing agricultural cooperation. As we have just noticed, cooperation and the square deal with value received for produce, is Christian. Christianizing the agricultural program means that farmers will make their own desires subservient to the welfare of the group, and farmers are beginning to see the necessity of this. This is probably the most effective way of bringing the Christian spirit into agriculture. The merit in cooperation, from the moral point of view, is that it balances the self-interest and social interest. It helps the individual to see that his efforts are of even greater significance when they are expended for the good of the group than when they are devoted to selfish interests only. This is the aim of the Christian program. Thus cooperation will help in life's struggle and make it more bearable, the community better and will build a real brotherhood within the community.

Let me close this section on the Church's interest in the agricultural problem by a word concerning the place of the preacher in all this. He should still be a leader though there are

others well educated along other lines. As the moral and spiritual leader, he should preach practical righteousness both personal and collective. To do this he must have the vision to interpret life in terms of character and spirit. In order to preach in this manner he must have some knowledge of the problems to be dealt with in every day living. Also his education should include something of the fundamental problems in agriculture. Only thus can he know if he is proceeding aright and giving a true interpretation to life in the light of its problems. Only by so doing will he be the respected leader he has the right to be.

The Church which will serve its community most efficiently must create for itself a sound financial policy. This means that the Rural Church must change its ideals to finances. The smallness of contributions in the past has been due to extreme individualism and isolation. However, in these days the country people are as well able to give in proportion to their means as are their city brethren. The lack of willingness on the part of farmers to adequately support the Church financially has led to all kinds of schemes, often more expensive than they are worth, to meet the obligations. It has also resulted in a poorly conducted program which lacks the challenge necessary to attract the leaders of society.

The first step in reforming the financial administration is to secure definite recognition on the part of the people of the worthwhileness of the program the Church is promoting. If there be any doubt as to its effectiveness then the Church should use every effort to formulate a program that will meet the community needs.

When a worthwhile program is given the community there is little difficulty in securing adequate financial support.

After the value of the service is admitted some system whereby the people can be regular in their contributions and the burden of the work distributed according to their ability. To supply this need the most efficient system is the budget and duplex envelope system used in so many churches. The introduction of this method will work wonders in the church that seriously undertakes it.

A further expression of the socialization of a Church and community is in the amount given toward the support of foreign missions. It is surprising how contributions to this cause will increase when the local program is one which challenges and appeals to people as worthwhile. The people will be challenged to contribute as their share in giving to others some of what they have received. Thus their social mind will not be confined to the local community but will contain a world wide outlook. The test of thriving and efficient Church lies in this activity and a Church alive to local needs, under the leadership of a wise pastor, will be awake to world needs and will respond to the call.

In the financial administration of the country church the matter of missionary aid is often an important factor. Of course, this rests with the denominational boards but wisdom should be used in a valid distribution of available funds. In the past, missionary aid, as we saw in a previous chapter, has been largely used to maintain competing churches where there has been no moral justification

for keeping them alive. Brunner¹ points out that each year \$3,000,000 goes to churches competing against each other, while in rural America one village in six or seven has no church. In these needy fields this \$3,000,000 could find a rich field. Missionary aid should go to those churches which really need it, which are really struggling with the problems of life and are having to fight alone.

When rural churches see that they must change their policy concerning financial matters, create a worthy program, adopt an efficient method of raising the money, and denominational boards wisely administer home mission funds, we will see a marked improvement in the financial matters of the local church.

In this thesis so much responsibility has been placed upon the country Church in bringing about the socialization of the community and the creation of an adequate community program, that it would be entirely amiss to say nothing of the type of man chosen to lead the Church in this mighty task.

Too often, even in these days of higher standards of training in all professions, the country pastor has no suitable training. Usually, he has no seminary training and quite often lacks a university or college training. Even if a seminary student desires special training for the rural field, except in few seminaries, he cannot get it. This is largely due to the fact that in the past the rural field has been considered as merely a way station to the city church.

¹

The Church and the Agricultural Crisis. p. 42.

For this reason the average rural pastor has little understanding of the problems and peculiarities of rural work. This is the cause of the decline of many rural churches in rich fields, which under proper leadership might be thriving and contributing to the social and spiritual life of the community.

People often think that the city is where one finds the superior preachers but there is as great a call for scholarship, organizing ability, educational insight and the ability to deeply influence people in the rural church as there is in the city. I believe that after one has read the page pages showing the great place the Church can fill in the community he will be ready to say that only such a man can hope to live up to what is expected of him. Pastors trained as specialists in the rural field will bring a new
¹
 day to the country Church.

It is a hopeful thing that today certain seminaries are including courses in their curricula on the rural Church as such. In addition they are urging prospective rural pastors among university students to prepare themselves in rural sociology, psychology, economics, agricultural problems and so on. We can well anticipate better days in the future of the rural Church when more of these men find themselves churches in their chosen field.

In addition to his specialized training, the rural pastor must possess certain other qualifications. He must be able to

¹
 Groves, E.R.: The Rural Mind and Social Welfare. p. 167-168.

sense the needs of his community. When certain situations arise he will have to know whether to treat them negatively or positively. He should know how to construct a program of creative community building which will challenge the impulse of youth to do something. If he does not he will not reach them and they and the Church will suffer. Along this line he should be able to chart community needs to that the people can see how they can relate themselves to the program. There is also the challenge coming to him to organize the recreational life under wholesome supervision. Furthermore, he should be able to enlist the cooperation of different groups without friction between them. This will mean understanding how to enlist the team work of the entire community. The rural pastor must be able to work hardest in the face of discouragement. This is about the hardest thing one can do. But he must enlist the support of a group of men who will stand by him when all others misunderstand his program and refuse to help. It is hard work in the face of seeming failure that will insure success. Lastly, "the rural minister must keep always in mind the other fact that his work is only a part, yet a very important part, of the larger task of bringing the Kingdom upon earth, and that in serving well in his community he is making himself eligible for the larger ranges of responsible service."¹

The rural pastor must develop the resources at hand, which can be most effectively used in the country community. The rural pastor can see the whole life of his people, not a segment alone, as

1

Earp, E. W.: The Rural Church Serving the Community. p. 93, 94. I am indebted to this book for the above qualifications of the rural minister, p. 91 f.f.

does the city pastor. Because he lives in such a laboratory of psychological, sociological, moral, and spiritual conditions he should train himself scientifically, in order to understand them. Such a scientific attitude will bring him into closer contact with the farmer who has similar attitudes. The pastor who thinks in terms of cause and effect in the concrete problems of the community places himself in the forefront of moral, social and spiritual service.

In conclusion, the rural pastor must make a program for the future anticipating new conditions and preparing for definite changes. He must also have the vision to govern its purposes. The program should be influenced more by what is coming into the country than by what is already there.

Perhaps it will seem that I have attached too much importance to the place of the rural church as a socializing agency in the rural community. I concede that many other institutions are accomplishing some of those tasks which I have treated in this thesis and they are to be thanked for the splendid work they are doing. In this type of community the Church will not have to bear the whole burden, thus releasing it for other work, although the Church can lend any possible support to the programs of these organizations which are making country life richer and happier. It is for the community in which nothing is being done along these lines that I would plead. It is in such a place that the Church can build for itself a place that is absolutely indispensable and supreme in the community life.

By way of conclusion we might say that the place of the Church in the community is larger than the mere conduct of worship and preaching services, a Sunday School, young people's society and prayer meeting. Its work bursts out of these molds and flows over into other phases of community life. These are only a part of the larger task before it. It must realize that everything which contributes to human happiness and welfare contributes to the growing spiritual life. Upon recognizing this fact the Church will be led into dealing with every condition of human life related to human welfare. The Church will support every improvement of economic conditions. It will encourage better education and reading. It will lead in the conservation of the recreational life of all ages in the community. It will lead to the centralization of the home as the heart of community life. It will lead to the organization of the community which will produce the greatest amount of democracy and socialization of all the people of the community.

While it is doing all this, the Church will not neglect to constantly remind the people that these things are being done for the name of Him who came that men might have a more abundant life. That is the call. Not a community program for the sake of a program or an institution but a program that men might learn to live together in harmony and that their lives might be richer, happier and more God like. That is the way to the Kingdom of God and the Church which leads along this path is worthy to be called a house of God.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

RURAL LIFE SURVEY FORMS.

These forms are those worked out by the College of Agriculture in the University of California, Division of Agricultural Education.

I. The Community Territory

1. Name.....
2. Area.....
3. Map showing.
 - a. Geographical boundaries
 - b. Community center
 - c. Highways
 - d. Homes, schools, church, etc.
 - e. Community industries as creamery, etc.
4. Topography
 - a. General surface features.....
 - b. Distance of center from nearest railway station.....
 - c. Drainage.....
 - d. Soil.....
 - e. Climate.....

II. Community History

1. Facts about early settlement and growth
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Economic changes that have taken place
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Social changes during growth of community
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. Religion and morals.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

III. Community People (Family as the Unity)

1. Name of head of family.....
2. Nationality of family
 - a. Native.....
 - b. Foreign born, nationality.....
3. Size of family
 - a. Husband and wife living.....
 - b. No. of children under 6 years; boys.....girls
 - c. No. of children under 14 years; boys.....girl.....
 - d. No. of young people 14-18 years; boys.....girls.....
 - e. No. of young people 19-21 years; boys.....girls.....
 - f. All other members of household; male.....female.....

4. Education

- a. No. of members of household that have graduated from grammar school; males.....females.....
- b. No. of members of household that have graduated from a high school; males.....females.....
- c. No. of members of household that have graduated from a college or university; males.....females.....
- d. No. of children at present attending grammar school; boys..... girls.....
- e. No. of youth at present attending a high school; boys.... girls....
- f. No. of young people at present attending an institution of higher learning; what.....male.....female.....
- g. No. of family who cannot read or write English; male.....female....
- h. No. of family attending a day or night Americanization school; male.....female.....

5. Family history

- a. Ancestral stock.....
- b. Migrations.....
- c. Services to community.....
- d. Services to the county.....
- e. Services to the state.....
- f. Services to the nation.....

6. Community spirit

- a. Rural mindedness and outlook.....

IV. Community House.

- 1. Character.....
- 2. Size.....
- 3. When erected.....
- 4. Equipment.....
- 5. Needs.....

V. Community Leadership

- 1. Personal.....
- 2. Institutional.....
- 3. Associational.....

VI. Community Organization

- 1. Community Administration
 - a. Plan of work.....
 - b. Objectives.....
 - c. Methods
- 2. Organizations within the community
 - A. Economic; Plan, objectives, methods, results of
 - a. Mutual insurance.....
 - b. Creameries.....
 - c. Canneries.....
 - d. Farmer's telephone.....
 - e. Horticultural.....
 - f. Dairy and live stock.....
 - g. Co-operative store.....
 - h. Miscellaneous.....

- B. Social, Educational Religious; Plans, Objectives, etc.
 - a. Church societies.....
 - b. Literary clubs.....
 - c. Parent-teacher associations.....
 - d. W. C. T. U... ..
 - e. Y. M. C. A.
 - f. Y. A. C. A.
 - g. Fraternal orders.....
 - h. The Grange.....
 - i. Farmer's Educational and Co-operative Union.....
 - j. Recreation.....
 - k. Miscellaneous.....

VII. Community Consolidation of Schools

- 1. Area of new educational unit.....
- 2. Assessed valuation.....
- 3. Character of highways.....
- 4. Statistical data...
 - a. School population.....
 - b. Finances.....
- 5. Benefits of consolidation in the open country.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

VIII. Community Improvement Programme

- 1. Better relations of people to land
 - a. Land purchase and lease.....
 - b. Rural Credit facilities.....
 - c. Land development for homes and financial returns.....
 - d. Property protection.....
- 2. Better farming
 - a. Farm management.....
 - b. Labor and equipment.....
 - c. Soil conservation.....
 - d. Crop adaptation.....
 - e. Live stock betterment.....
- 3. Better communication
 - a. Road improvement.....
 - b. Better mail and telephone service.....
- 4. Better business
 - a. Collective buying and selling.....
 - b. Market facilities.....
 - c. Home manufacture of products.....
- 5. Conservation of natural resources
 - a. Water power and supply.....
 - b. Forestry.....
 - c. Fishing.....
 - d. Natural parks and recreation grounds.....

6. Improvement of country life
 - a. Home betterment.....
 - b. Better education.....
 - c. Community health and sanitation.....
 - d. Rural recreation.....
 - e. Rural beautification.....
 - f. Public morality.....
 - g. Community civics.....
7. Better adjustments
 - a. Relations of city and country.....
 - b. Relation of the individual to the group.....
 - c. Co-operation of agencies.....

APPENDIX B.

PAR STANDARDS FOR THE RURAL CHURCH

The standards given here are found in Dana: An Adventure in Ministerial and Church Efficiency. As the average church in the country is of limited means, equipment, and leadership, the chart given here is suited for such a church.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

1. Comfortable and attractive parsonage rent free.
2. Auditorium adequate to seat maximum attendance at regular services.
3. Organ or piano.
4. Provision for curtaining off Sunday-school classes or departments.
5. Good lamps or acetylene lighting system.
6. Adequate ventilation, preferably by ventilator at top of room.
7. Slightly in-door or out-door lavatories, neatly kept.
8. Bulletin boards for church announcements.
9. Equipment for social occasions.
10. Playground with some recreational equipment.
11. Parking space, or horse-sheds.
12. Properties kept in perfect repair, and good order, inside and out.

Total points 12. Highest possible score 120.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

FINANCE

1. Church budget, including both local expenses and benevolences, adopted annually by the congregation.
2. Every Member Canvass for weekly offering, made annually on the basis of the budget; all members, attendants and unattached persons solicited; envelope system used.
3. Budget of benevolences meeting denomination apportionment, or a minimum equal to one-third of the expense budget.
4. All current bills paid monthly, and an arrangement at the bank whereby minister's salary is placed to his credit on the first day of every month.
5. Systematic plan of payments, on principal and interest of any church indebtedness, with additional provision for any yearly refunds due Church Building Society.
6. Properties adequately insured.

Total points 6. Highest possible score 60.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

MEETINGS

1. At least one service of worship and Sunday-school each Sabbath.
2. Regular mid-week service, church night or cottage prayer meeting.
3. A Junior Church, or the like, at Sunday worship.

Total points 3. Highest possible score 30.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

RELIGIOUS AND MISSIONARY EDUCATION

1. An every Sunday church-school.
2. Enrollment equal to resident membership with an average attendance of two-thirds of its membership.
3. Graded Lessons as far as practical, with quarterlies, lesson leaves, and Sunday-school papers recommended by the denominational Boards.
4. Efficient Home Department and Cradle Roll.
5. Provision made for enlistment and training of leaders for church and Sunday-school work.
6. Definite and regular attempts to bring pupils into church membership with specific preparatory instruction.
7. Daily Vacation Bible School, and Week Day School of Religion.
8. Missions presented from the pulpit and in Sunday-school.
9. At least one representative in professional Christian service.

Total points 9. Highest possible score 90.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

MINISTRY

1. A resident pastor within the village and area giving full time to his ministry.
2. A salary of at least \$1800 with free use of parsonage.
3. The church helping financially in matter of pastor's membership in the Annuity Fund.
4. Encouragement and financial assistance given pastor and wife enabling them to attend state and local denominational meetings, summer schools, etc.

Total points 4. Highest possible score 40.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

PROGRAM

1. Systematic attempts to serve over as large an area of the country-side as possible, meeting every need, conditional opportunity revealed by a careful study of the same.
2. A definite plan and program setting goals for the year's work adopted by church officers and congregation, and held steadily before the attention of the church.
3. Assumption of responsibility for some part of the church program (i.e. regular stated service,) by at least twenty-five percent of church members.
4. A regular system of farmstead visitation participated in by both pastor and people.
5. Systematic evangelism of the educational sort reaching the entire area served and every resident therein.
6. Definite effort of interest the various age and sex groups in religious, social and recreational activities.
7. An established goal for yearly increase in membership.
8. Service rendered to all occupational classes and all racial elements not otherwise provided for.
9. Community service a definite part of church work.
10. A yearly systematic survey and mapping of area served, with view of a constant adaptation of the church program to changing needs and opportunities as they may arise.

Total points 10. Highest possible score 100.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

CO-OPERATION.

1. Co-operation with local or nearby churches.
2. Co-operation with state and county interdenominational religious agencies.
3. Co-operation with local community organizations.
4. Co-operation with county, state, and national welfare agencies.
5. Co-operation with local and county agricultural agencies.
6. Co-operation with denominational Boards.

Total points 6. Highest possible score 60.

Local church points.....

Local church score.....

SUMMARY.

Total points 50. Highest possible score 500.

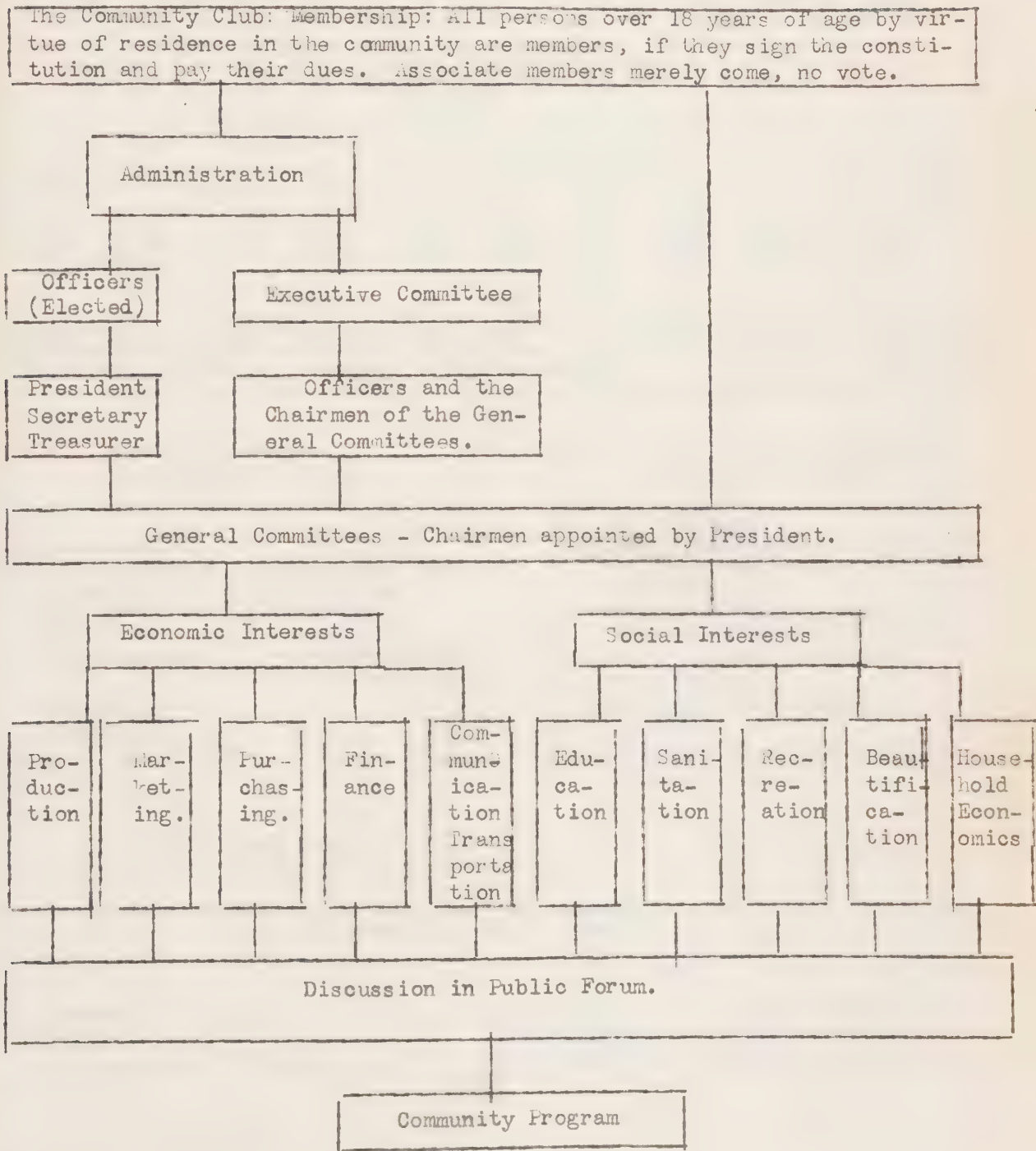
Local church points

Local church score.....

APPENDIX C.

CHART OF
COMMUNITY CLUB PLAN

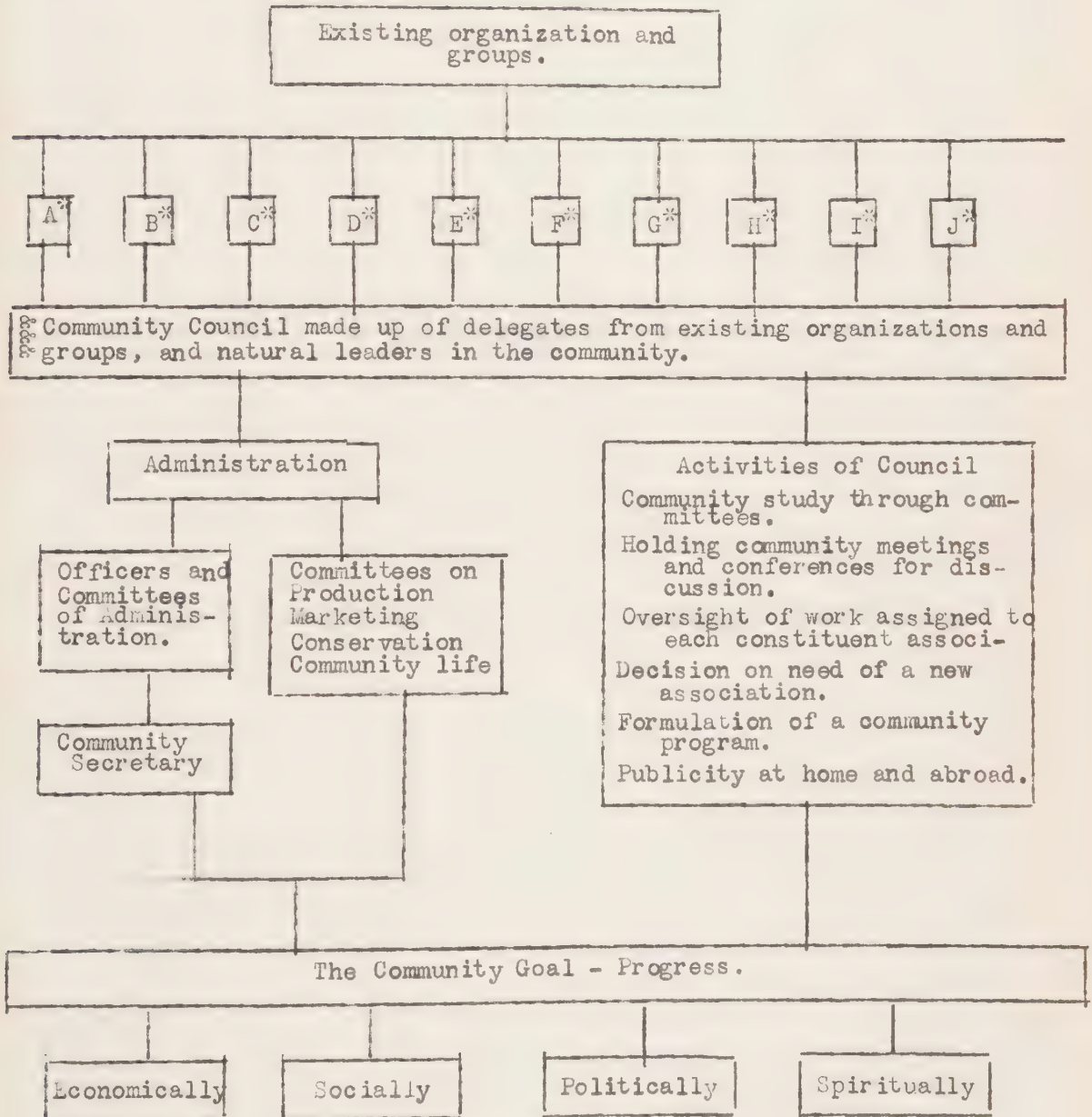
As suggested by Professor O.J.Kern, University of California.



APPENDIX D.

Chart of
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

As suggested by Professor G. J. Kern, University of California.



*

Squares represent delegates making up the Council.

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